

Don't Count on NATO—*Theodore Draper*
Christopher Hill on Blasphemy • William Gass on Ford Madox Ford

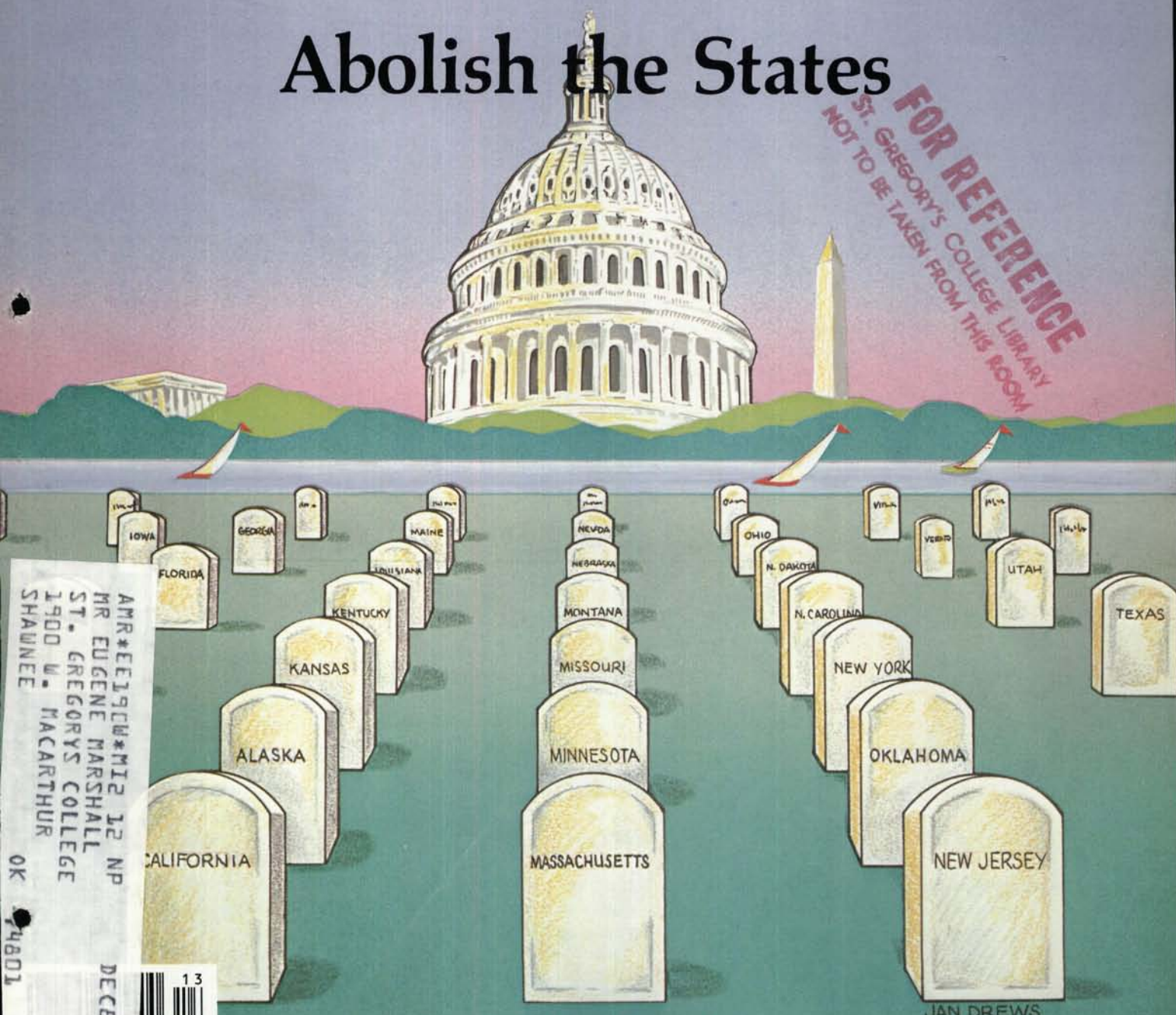
THE NEW REPUBLIC

March 28, 1981

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by Michael Kinsley

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TRB

from Washington
March 28, 1981

Hip-Shooter

What a scene for Hollywood: the brisk air, the blue sky, the forsythia just bursting, the casual, good-guy president mounting the steps of the Capitol to see Republican leaders, the cameras flashing, the pursuing reporters throwing questions, the president tossing back impromptu answers on billion-dollar matters. What a lovely scene. But it's a hell of a way to run a government.

Reagan, as he has done often in a lifetime, threw out a quick retort which was better left unsaid, and which he had to modify 90 minutes later. It was all very trivial, perhaps, but Reagan is in the midst of an almost revolutionary battle to control a runaway federal budget; he is trying to alter the direction the government has followed for 25 years. He wants to cut \$50 billion from an overblown budget and increase defense spending at the same time. The mass of the public and a great many middle-of-the-road economists favor his purpose. We are living beyond our means. But can he reach his goal with the compass he is using: rewarding the rich, squeezing the poor? He has a new, untried, and what to many seems a reckless supply-side economic theory, a theory that by cutting taxes he may somehow get more revenue. The question is how much of his package he can

get enacted. And what is his attitude to critics? He has a record of almost unimpeachable far-right positions, and it irritates a lot of people that he is doing now just what he promised to do for the last 30 years: trim education, welfare, government aid, federal intervention, regulation, and the rest.

Reagan's spur-of-the-moment attack at the Capitol was in reply to a new estimate by the Congressional Budget Office which declares that his figures are unrealistically optimistic, by \$25 billion or so. The highly respectable CBO was created by the 1974 Budget Reform Act, which finally gave Congress a modern budget mechanism. It is supposed to be completely nonpartisan and is forbidden to make specific policy recommendations. Its first and only head is Alice M. Rivlin (serving her second four-year term), who looks like everybody's favorite high school teacher. CBO has been criticized before—when its figures indicated that if President Ford wanted an economic recovery in fiscal year 1977, he should adopt a more expansionary budget. It seemed to be right in that case.

The CBO gives Congress an independent, professional review of White House proposals. Last week it didn't go into the justice of specific Reagan budget cuts, but it did indicate that the overall estimates of income, employment, and inflation were grossly askew. Reagan replied angrily to reporters at the Capitol: "That's them practicing what they've been preaching for the last 30 years. Their figures are phony!"

Reagan's easy answers are fun, but sometimes unwise. He has been making them for years. Republican leaders explained things at their conference. When he came out he softened his comment: "What they really are is simply different assumptions," he said. He added that his first characterization "probably wasn't the proper word to use." Well, fine.

On September 26, 1976, at the Executive Club of Chicago, Reagan proposed transferring one-quarter of all the activities of the federal government, amounting to \$90 billion, back to the states and localities; he was cheered so loudly it echoed. But the proposal dogged him all across the New Hampshire primary that year. He wisely dropped it. It was like other proposals in his past—optional use of atomic weapons by NATO area commanders; sell the Tennessee Valley Authority; with-

draw recognition from Russia. In fairness, some of these proposals were voiced years ago. But during the 1980 campaign he said there was no oil shortage; he hinted at ending the grain embargo; he bewailed severing diplomatic representation with Taiwan. Ronald Reagan is never more charming than when he retreats from a delicate position. At a New Hampshire airport in January 1976 he reviewed with this reporter a proposal he had been making in primary speeches: the state was sending \$115 million a year to Washington, he said, and getting back only \$100 million in services; why not keep it all in the state to begin with? But didn't that extra \$15 million, he was asked, go into things like military costs and federal highways? He appeared taken aback. "I never understood it that way," he said. "If I'm mistaken, I stand corrected." He said he couldn't remember the source of his statistics. No one could have been more candid and disarming.

Reagan's attack on the CBO isn't a new departure. He has come closer and closer to charging that critics are politically motivated. He told women members of Congress at the White House last week that bureaucrats are fighting him: "They are trying to create an image that we are picking on the poor because they don't want to lose their clientele." He asked whether unemployment is real or imaginary, citing help wanted advertisements in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. "Maybe we are encouraging people to delay taking jobs," he speculated.

The Reagan budget distributes the burdens of retrenchment in ways that could set national priorities for years to come. His advisers justify tax cuts to the rich as liberating more money for savings and investment. But a striking 30-page summary from the non-partisan League of Women Voters "vehemently opposes" many basic Reagan recommendations. It is the strongest document that I remember from this neutral and influential group. It deplores the proposed abandonment of legal services for the poor. It asks why more pork-barrel river and harbor projects aren't dropped. It is "frankly appalled" by foreign aid slashes and "the administration's callous acknowledgment that cuts in US aid to multilateral organizations [World Bank, etc.] will 'mainly affect the poorer countries of Africa and the Asian subcontinent.'" The battle has just begun.

Correspondence

Positive freedom

To the editors:

Perhaps Charles Krauthammer is correct in implying (Washington Diarist, TNR, February 28) that today's gurus and cults embody the authoritarian ideal of "positive freedom," although I hardly think this holds for all such groups. Interestingly, the most vociferous critics of cults, especially the supporters of religious deprogramming, also exemplify this ideal. Positive freedom denotes a conception of freedom which views its exercise as requiring a capacity (e.g., for rationality) such that individuals who lack this capacity can be coerced if necessary to put them in a position to exercise freedom. This approach to freedom is clearly exemplified by the view, taken by the more ferocious opponents of cults, that freedom of religion presupposes "freedom of mind," and cultists, being under "mind control," are not freely exercising religious choice and therefore can be coerced to restore them to personal autonomy. Surely coercive deprogramming is a classic instance of "forcing men to be free."

I do not know very much about Shree Ragneesh and his followers. Neither, I suspect, does Krauthammer. It does not follow that because Ms. Ryan talks about "total freedom" and her guru giving people self-control that coercion of some sort is being used or justified in the group. Many spiritual devotees believe that disciplines designed to enhance consciousness must be freely chosen if they are to be of value. The notion of transcending "the prison of ordinary life" through mysticism is much older than Rousseau. Perhaps Buddha should be added to Krauthammer's rogues' gallery of proto-totalitarian purveyors of positive freedom snake-oil?

Thomas Robbins
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Charles Krauthammer replies:

Mr. Robbins is correct to say that the idea of transcendence is as old as the hills. My point is that Rousseau did two things to that idea: (1) he politicized it, making it the goal of politics and not religion, and (2) he gave it the name freedom, implying that commonly un-

derstood ("negative") freedom is a fraud. Totalitarians tend to endorse both of these actions. But not all believers in positive freedom do. Some reject Rousseau's first innovation, with its coercive implications, while accepting the second with its anti-liberal ideology. Ms. Ryan, for example, appears too apolitically spaced-out to begin forcibly converting others to her brand of transcendence. But she certainly believes, as did Rousseau, that transcendence is the stuff of true freedom. The only other way to explain her contention that her condition of total obedience is one of total freedom is to say that she means nothing at all.

Soviet-Pakistan border

To the editors:

Theodore Draper erred in asserting ("Rolling Communism Backward," TNR, March 7) that "there is a short Soviet-Pakistan border." In fact, the Soviet Union and Pakistan are prevented from touching by a narrow strip of Afghan territory, the Vakhn, which extends to the border of Chinese Sinkiang. If I am not mistaken, some of the fiercest resistance to the Soviet invasion has taken place in the Vakhn.

John M. Evans
Foreign Service Officer
Washington, DC

Price rationing

To the editors:

Gar Alperovitz and Jeff Faux indicate in their recent piece, "Marching to Dunkirk" (TNR, February 21), that the dialogue between traditional and supply-side Republicans could leave no practical choice but governmental controls. Unless common sense is in extremely short supply, it should be apparent that governmental control of the price of any commodity has the following results: 1) Immediately prior to the imposition of controls, prices for the commodity (be it labor, oil, or whatever) skyrocket as suppliers of the commodity realize that their option to raise prices for what they sell will shortly be removed. 2) During the period in which the controls are imposed, supply of the commodity will diminish, because absent a comprehensive (and comprehensively enforced) system of controls, sup-

pliers of the commodity will choose not to supply it rather than watch their costs for supplying it exceed their income. 3) After controls are lifted, prices will skyrocket again as those formerly affected by controls seek to recoup what they regard as profits they were improperly prevented from earning.

In short, it seems that our society, and indeed probably every society, must choose between two ways to determine access to any commodity: use of the market mechanism (i.e. prices) or use of the government (i.e. controls). While prices as a means of rationing have harsh features that may require governmental amelioration, they are in my view infinitely preferable to governmental controls, which rather than being subject to the immediately felt preference of the consumer, are subject only (and indirectly) to infrequently held elections.

Leonard J. Cooperman
Marathon Shores, Florida

Social rank by flower

To the editors:

The social ranking of English flower shows as enumerated by Henry Fairlie (review of *The Official Preppy Handbook*, TNR, March 7) is most interesting, but Fairlie's Marxist explanation (a sort of labor theory of value) for the rankings is somewhat puzzling. Almost anyone would concede that a camellia is socially superior to a geranium—simply because it is more refined. But Fairlie's thesis is really challenged by the fact that the early chrysanthemum show outranks the late chrysanthemum show by three places. By his logic, should not the chrysanthemum positions be reversed, since the late chrysanthemums are around longer than the earlies and therefore require more watering, weeding, in short, labor?

Lucy Edwards Despard
New York, New York

The road to busing

To the editors:

In "The Wrong-Way Bus Ride," (TNR, February 28) John H. Bunzel asserts that while the courts acted properly in ruling on the purely constitutional issue of *de jure* segregation in *Brown* (1954), they wrongly entered the political realm by mandating busing as a means of

(continued on page 40)

THE *Real*

CAUSE OF INFLATION

President Reagan believes the inflation can be arrested by a sharp reduction in government costs. The Federal Reserve System has been trying to control inflation through its fiscal policies for the past 20 years. The cost has been tremendous in high interest rates to business and consumer, running from 13% to nearly 22%.

Meanwhile, none of the economists who get all the national publicity has named the real villain: Land Speculators who can hold land off the market at a net yearly cost of 1% — waiting for inflation, population growth, and an enormous nearby investment of other taxpayers' money to double — triple — even get 100% to 200% rise in price.

Today's under-taxation of land price total, estimated by the Federal Census Bureau at more than TWO TRILLION DOLLARS, gives land owners an almost completely unearned increment. Says FORTUNE: "The inflation price of land raises the price of everything we buy." Says TIME: "The soaring price of land for farming is perhaps the reason for the soaring cost of food."

When it was proposed in the late 19th century that a tax on land only be paid to meet all the cost of government, the tax on land was actually meeting nearly half the cost of government, local, state, and national — whereas today the land tax is barely meeting 2% of government cost!

Unfortunately, the large landowners who run our governments and corporations that influence governments won't support a system that would force them to develop or give up their vast holdings.

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Contents

TRB from Washington	2	Hip-Shooter
	3	Correspondence
Comment	5	Grief and Exploitation
Robert A. Cohen	6	Stamp Act
John Osborne	7	White House Watch: They Done It
Paul A. London	8	Inflationary Secrets
Emily Yoffe	10	Good Soldier Schweiker
Stephen Cohen	13	Wrong on Human Rights
Theodore Draper	14	Western Insecurity
Michael Kinsley	17	The Withering Away of the States
		Books and the Arts
Stanley Kauffmann	22	Films: Womanhood
Robert Brustein	23	Theater: A Theater Marking Time
Roger Shattuck	24	Poem: "Moving Picture"
William Gass	26	Homage to Ford Madox Ford
William Trevor	30	Ford's England
Christopher Hill	32	Treason Against God by Leonard W. Levy
Michele Slung	35	The White Hotel by D. M. Thomas
Josephine Hendin	37	Son of Sam by Lawrence D. Klausner
		The Stranger Beside Me by Ann Rule
	39	Brief Review:
Enoch Brater		Company by Samuel Beckett
Washington Diarist	43	Old-Fashioned Romance

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Grief and Exploitation

Since July 1979, 22 black children have disappeared in Atlanta. Twenty have been found dead. Investigators now believe that most of the cases, particularly the earlier ones, are unconnected, and are the result of domestic strife or child abuse, with a few possibly related to criminal activities like drug dealing. According to the DeKalb County medical examiner, if a single killer did not exist at the beginning, "we have created him and he is killing now."

Historically, such killers are difficult to catch. The original Jack the Ripper was never found. The confessed Boston strangler committed perhaps half, and possibly none, of the murders attributed to him. John Gacey killed 32 boys before anyone was even aware there was a case to be solved. He was discovered by accident. Son of Sam and the Yorkshire Ripper were caught as a result of lucky tips. The Atlanta case has yet to yield an eyewitness, a crime scene, a motive, or a confession.

These are the unfortunate facts. They are certainly no consolation to the bereaved families or comfort to the terrorized black children of Atlanta. The families and children deserve our sympathy and support. That does not mean, however, that those who decline to engage in the officially sanctioned grief rituals of our civil religion are necessarily hard-hearted. Some fear that protest marches are worse than useless because such massive public response may spur the murderer on. Others who during the Iran hostage crisis viewed yellow ribbons as symbols of helplessness are reluctant now to wear green ribbons and institutionalize advertised impotence as the correct response to crisis and tragedy. And some are appalled by publicity hounds like the Guardian Angels, a uniformed group of street- and media-wise kids who act as a citizen patrol on New York subways and who sent a contingent of 11 to instruct Atlanta black kids in self-defense. (Atlanta

received them frostily.) And yet, in the face of evil, people feel called upon to do something. We each choose our own form of action, public or private. When the feeling is genuine, these gestures—even those we do not personally endorse—deserve our respect.

But some black leaders believe that grief is an inadequate response to the Atlanta killings. They would like to politicize that grief and turn it into anger. They deserve no respect at all. The mayor of Washington, Marion Barry, said that the federal government would have done more in Atlanta if the children had been white. One slain child's mother, now on a speaking tour, said that the black middle class would have done more if the kids had not been poor. These charges are particularly offensive to Atlanta's black mayor, Maynard Jackson, and his black commissioner of public safety, Lee Brown. Nine months ago they established a special investigative force that has grown from five to 78 people. They established a reward of \$10,000 for information on the murders. They have worked tirelessly to keep their community alert but calm. Meanwhile, the federal government has sent in the FBI and almost \$2.5 million. The president has expressed the nation's concern and support. In contrast, the two most recent mass murder cases involving white boys, the Gacey case in Chicago and the Corll case in Texas, drew not a fraction of the attention and federal involvement the Atlanta case has received.

Barry further contended that the mood in the country condones attacks on blacks. This proposition was amplified by Jesse Jackson in a speech in Washington on March 8. The Atlanta killings could not be seen in isolation, he said. They could only be understood in the context of the DeFunis, Bakke, and Welch affirmative action challenges, the November elections, the swing to conservatism in Congress, budget cuts and the attacks on the poor by the Reagan administration, and

racial incidents in Miami, Buffalo, and elsewhere. His conclusion was that "it is open season on black people."

Now, no one, not even Jesse Jackson, knows anything about the Atlanta killer—whether he (she?) is black or white, whether he is a methodical racist who kills children as a vengeful assault on a hated ethnic enemy (as George Habash does) or whether he is a pathetic schizophrenic obeying inner voices (as Son of Sam was). To declare a connection between conservative politics and the murder of black children in the absence of any evidence requires a breathtaking leap of bad faith. Such demagoguery is all the more distasteful coming from Jackson, who only months ago embraced as brothers men who plan machine-gun attacks on Israeli schoolchildren and then rush to claim credit for these "operations."

And it is no excuse to claim, as a front-page story in the *Washington Post* did, that Barry and Jackson were merely repeating in milder language what ordinary blacks were saying. The *Post* quoted one "man in the street" as saying this: "I don't think it is a sick person. I think it is organized. The blatant racism that we suffer in America is just another level of the killing of black children in Atlanta. Ronald Reagan himself is a sign of that racism—his whole diversion of funds from social programs to the military budget. I don't think Reagan has any concern in seeing that racial violence be stopped." It is, perhaps, understandable that some members of a grief-stricken community might feel that way. It is unpardonable for their leaders to encourage and exploit the darkest and most irrational fears of their followers.

In the 1960s it was as meaningless as it was fashionable to say that political assassinations showed that we were a sick society. In 1981 it is irresponsible and dangerous to say that the Atlanta tragedy is an indictment of a racist society. For all its faults, this society appears to be doing as much as any society can to solve these crimes. It was George Wallace who specialized in making issues racially divisive. We thought we had retired him years ago.

Stamp Act

This week and again in June, the United States Postal Service delivers the latest in a 10-year series of jolts to second-class mail users, including *The New Republic*. For most people, the three-cent boost in the cost of a first-class stamp is an annoying but expected part of the relentlessly rising cost of living. In fact, as postal authorities are quick to point out, the 20 percent increase in first-class rates compares favorably with increases in the cost of other goods and services since May 1978, the date of the last increase in the price of a stamp. And mailing an ordinary letter still costs only

two-thirds of what the same service costs in most major European countries.

Second-class mail costs are something else. The expense of the mail service used to distribute magazines and newspapers has risen so fast that mailing *The New Republic* to you soon will be nearly as expensive as printing it. Today it costs us about \$8,700 per week to mail the magazine. As of June 1, it will cost nearly \$12,700 per week. This 45 percent increase comes on top of skyrocketing past increases as follows:

Period	Per Issue
June 1970	\$ 1,250
June 1976	2,830
June 1977	3,530
April 1978	4,390
June 1978	5,250
June 1979	6,982
March 1981	8,700
April 1981	9,410
June 1981	12,670

This represents a 915 percent increase in second-class mailing costs in 11 years. Starting on June 1, we will have to pay \$610,000 per year for what cost us \$60,000 in 1970. In contrast, our subscription price—now \$28 per year—has risen only 133 percent (from \$12) during the same period. The consumer price index, meanwhile, has risen 142 percent.

Second-class cost hikes have not hit all magazines with equal force. Large-circulation weeklies such as *Time* and *Newsweek* and monthlies such as *Reader's Digest* can afford to presort their own mail and obtain a postal discount. They also have multiple printing plants and mailing entry points. These simple alternatives are not economical for smaller publications. What's happening here is that the postal service in effect is paying its users for doing what the post office used to be in the business of doing—sorting and delivering the mail.

No one should fight a public agency's efforts to hold down costs and improve efficiency. It makes sense to encourage large mailers to share the postal work load and thereby keep down the total costs of the postal system. At the same time, there is an important public interest to be served in holding down postal rates for



small magazines. Their survival ensures that people will get a diversity of views on public issues.

The latest round of increases and long-term prospects for further steep rises is a noose tightening around the necks of smaller-circulation, independent journals of opinion like *The New Republic*. This postal catastrophe makes survival difficult for those of us who still publish and it prohibits entry into the market of new publications. The postal rate authorities obviously don't intend to censor opinion or to limit exercise of the First Amendment, but that is the effect of huge rate increases. People with independent views, when faced with increasingly overwhelming odds against publishing, may simply choose to remain silent.

Robert A. Cohen

White House Watch They Done It

Some of the people who are trying to run the country and, by extension, the world from the Reagan White House and its environs have behaved lately in rather peculiar ways. Here is an example.

At a White House press briefing on March 12, Deputy Press Secretary Karna Small casually announced that "there will be a background briefing on El Salvador at the State Department at 1:30 this afternoon." Later in Small's briefing, amidst intensely confused discussions of policy on international terrorism and what happens to people who vanish from welfare rolls, she said she'd just been handed a note to the effect that the State Department briefing would occur "at 2:30 with John Bushnell and it's billed as an update on El Salvador, if people are interested." It was clear then and afterward that Small, a bright young woman who is learning how to cope with the White House press crowd, didn't realize that background briefers are not supposed to be identified on the record, as she'd identified Bushnell. At State, Bushnell was duly introduced as "a senior State Department official" who would speak "on background, so that you will not be able to use his name." In Secretary of State Alexander Haig's ripped-up State Department, Bushnell more or less ranked as a "senior official" with the temporary title of acting assistant secretary for inter-American affairs. He's a career Foreign Service officer who had been chief deputy to Assistant Secretary William Bowdler, whom Haig had abruptly ejected. Haig simultaneously fired and in effect hounded out of the service career officer Robert White, who'd been Jimmy Carter's last ambassador to El Salvador. White's only proven sin before his dismissal had been to say aloud before Ronald Reagan was inaugurated that reckless talk by

Reagan transitionists had endangered the lives of White in El Salvador and his colleague in Nicaragua, as it might have.

That was history in March, though. The relevant point was that Haig's treatment of White was part of the new administration's elaborate and overblown effort, beginning with Haig's testimony at his confirmation hearing, to bill El Salvador, a small and wretchedly poor Central American country, as the first test of a determination to resist Soviet and communist intervention in this hemisphere and elsewhere in a way that previous administrations hadn't resisted it. John Bushnell had joined in that effort, justifying Ambassador White's dismissal to congressional committees and generally echoing the Haig-Reagan argument that a dangerous "Marxist-Leninist" intrusion in El Salvador had to be stopped. Haig had said that Cuba was the immediate source of supplies to communist guerrillas in El Salvador and that if necessary the problem of communist supply would be dealt with "at the source." Counsellor Edwin Meese III, who is in overall charge of policy formulation for Reagan at the White House, said on national TV that this could mean a naval blockade of Cuba, which would be an act of war. Haig sent personal emissaries to Europe and to Latin America with evidence from captured documents of Soviet-Cuban supply and intervention in El Salvador. Leaked reports, exaggerated but not false, of plans to beef up both military and economic aid to El Salvador's shaky junta magnified the draw-the-line hoopla.

Three consequences of all this brought John Bushnell to the briefer's podium on March 12. First, the US and world media emphasized the military aspects of the propaganda and the build-up and saw in it the makings of another Vietnam. Second, US allies in Europe made it clear there and through officials visiting Washington that they thought the US was, to say the least, over-talking and overdoing a good thing. Finally, print media and television magnified the uproar beyond anything intended by the administration, and this while all hands, including Haig, were trying to focus national attention on Reagan's tax- and budget-cutting program. The announcement of the Bushnell briefing at the White House suggested that it had been ordered there, a notion that was promoted at the State Department. Karna Small and her boss, press secretary James Brady, said it had not been and it probably wasn't, given the high quotient of innocence in the White House press operation. Whether Bushnell alone thought it up or acted on orders remains a mystery at this writing. Anyhow, he was introduced on schedule by acting department spokesman William Dyess and said forthwith: "Our impression is that the Salvador story is running about five times as big as it is; but maybe if we talk to you about it you will understand it's not such a big deal."

The reporters present reacted mildly, considering that Bushnell and his superiors, notably Haig and the President, had made it inevitable that the media would

play the El Salvador story big. An official who was present says some of the reporters stared at Bushnell for minutes, bug-eyed. One of them recovered sufficiently to ask: "... do you feel in retrospect that Secretary of State Haig made a mistake in making such a big deal out of this, and now you want to deemphasize it?" Bushnell answered: "I don't think he made such a big deal out of it. He perhaps opened the jar and he didn't perhaps realize how many genies were in it." Mostly he argued that he was asking only for balance with other news subjects, not trying to get the El Salvador story downplayed. Confronted with his masters' efforts to play up the situation, Bushnell conceded: "... we had a part of the story which we thought was essential to get out, which is what the communist worldwide network has done. ... That part of getting that story out, certainly the State Department took the initiative on. ... It was very important that there be an understanding in the US and around the world that it is not the US which took the initiative to gear up the situation in El Salvador and make it a much more military situation—it is the communist side that did it first."

The communist side didn't command Ronald Reagan's and Alexander Haig's access to the media on this subject. That aside, however, Bushnell's superiors would have done well to thank him privately and let the Salvador furor subside somewhat. Instead, they helped the press—an institution which never welcomes being told it has gone to excesses, even if goaded—make a small additional furor of the Bushnell affair. Haig for a change dealt with it quite reasonably, saying nothing worse about Bushnell than that "whoever on our side made the statement, clearly was a little bit off the mark." At a breakfast with four reporters the next morning (March 13) Haig talked of the matter as if something *he* had said or had ordered said had been misconstrued. He referred to "the point that I made" and "the observation I made" on some undisclosed occasion (he'd been in Canada with the President when Bushnell briefed). Haig said he had said "that we would be better served in the long run if we could keep all this in balance." That night on PBS television, still unaware that Bushnell had been identified at the White House as the briefer, Haig was pressed by his persistent interviewers, Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer, into identifying him. At the White House on March 16, spokesman Brady said Bushnell "was speaking for himself," not the Reagan administration, and said he didn't think Reagan thinks "the press has overplayed El Salvador." Brady was good enough to say that Haig was "entitled to his view" that a better media balance with other subjects would be desirable. Also and more memorably, Brady took occasion to say: "The President is running foreign policy in this country, not the State Department." That's approximately what Gerald Ford once said about himself and Henry Kissinger.

It remained for Counselor Meese at a breakfast with

reporters March 18 to suggest that John Bushnell is in trouble. It was an especially egregious suggestion because Bushnell, as a career officer, is due for reassignment after more than two years as deputy assistant secretary. Meese said when a reporter raised the matter that the White House is not criticizing the media, as Bushnell might be thought to have done.

Question: "Why is he [Bushnell] still there?"

Meese: "I don't think he is."

Q.: "He was last week."

Meese: "That was last week. There are going to be a number of reorganizations going on at the State Department. I think he [Bushnell] is a holdover."

Also: "I'm sure he [Bushnell] was authorized to speak to the press. Perhaps his phraseology was less than totally artful."

It's too bad that there aren't more holdovers like John Bushnell, who is not "a holdover" in the sense implied by Meese, dealing with El Salvador.

John Osborne

Reagan, like Carter,
won't take on the unions.

Inflationary Secrets

President Reagan's inflation program is widely represented as radical and revolutionary, but it resembles President Carter's both politically and economically, in what it addresses and what it avoids. The Stockman-Reagan trilogy of budget cuts, lower taxes, and tight money is not unlike Jimmy Carter's agenda of tight (but not as tight) budgets, business tax cuts, and high interest rates which also was supposed to control inflation. The big policy difference, Reagan's large individual tax cut, certainly is not deflationary in the short run. Reagan's budget deficit actually may be larger than Carter's.

There is some difference in the two administrations' explanations for inflation, but not as much as many people think. Reagan places the blame squarely on the federal deficits. The last administration spread the blame more widely, targeting deficits, but also energy and food prices. But the addition of new culprits does little to explain why prices generally are going up at more than 10 percent per year.

Better explanations for what is happening are needed. Although the budget does need pruning, it also contains programs that are vital for the poor and it is not the major cause of inflation. Since 1975 deficits have ranged from \$45 billion to \$66 billion a year, and their size has had little correlation with the rate of inflation. Indeed, some of the worst years of inflation followed years of lower deficits and vice versa. Moreover, the US has a \$2.5-trillion economy and the varia-

tion in deficits, which has not exceeded about \$20 billion from one year to the next since 1975, is less than one percent of the GNP. Such changes in the deficit cannot account for escalation of the underlying inflation rate to 10 percent.

Tight money and higher interest rates favored by both administrations, far from controlling inflation, add to everybody's costs. Small business and individuals who rely on credit are hurt while larger corporations pass the costs on. Even though history has repeatedly demonstrated the failure of tight money as an economic remedy, some political equivalent of the Lorelei seems to lure administrations of both parties toward the same dangerous rocks. The hard money policies that caused stagnation in the 1870s and 1880s are back with us today.

Energy and food prices do cause month-to-month increases in inflation rates, but are not the fundamental cause of America's high base inflation rate. And the effects of such increases can be mitigated if they are absorbed by the whole economy without government controls. This has not been happening, however. Instead of everyone sharing the burden of inflation, some workers have been loading it onto the backs of others.

The major unacknowledged cause of inflation in the US—one that neither Carter nor Reagan policies have addressed—is a persistent increase in wages in the heavy industry area, which is growing less competitive as a result. In classic economic theory, workers in such industries as autos, steel, and railroads ought to suffer losses in real income as their employers falter. This would keep prices down, lessen unemployment, diminish inflation, and prevent employers from going to the wall. In fact, the opposite has been true during the last decade, and it is a central factor in the nation's inflation problem. But largely for political reasons (the unions involved tend to be powerful) successive administrations have declined to face the issue squarely. Just by exposing what has been happening, an administration could create public pressure against wage settlements that are not only economically unjustified, but also unfair—adding to the inflationary burdens the rest of us must bear.

STATISTICS ON steel, autos, and railroads tell the story. In 1970 steel was a high-wage industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, its workers' hourly wages were 28 percent higher than the average wage for US production workers. At the end of 1980, although employment in the industry dropped 19 percent and although foreign imports had risen to claim more than 16 percent of the US market, steel workers who managed to remain on the job made \$12.02 an hour, 74 percent more than the average US worker, who made \$6.92. The steel wage came to \$25,000 a year for a 40-hour week, not counting benefits, which also were significantly better than those received by most workers.

The same pattern holds in autos. The American industry has trouble selling its cars, but auto workers who made 22 percent more than the average US worker in 1970 now make 53 percent more. The average auto wage, \$10.56 per hour, provides an income of almost \$22,000 per year, compared to \$14,400 for the average non-supervisory worker. In the last 10 years, auto wages have risen 31 percent faster than the US average. Had they merely kept pace (as they shouldn't have in a weak industry), auto workers still would be making \$8.44 per hour, or \$17,560 per year without overtime or benefits. They would have kept well ahead of workers in other industries, including many that are expanding. For example, auto workers far outstrip workers in the fabricated metals, furniture, lumber, electric machinery, food processing, and apparel industries, not to mention the growing service sector.

It's not possible to say how many more auto workers would have jobs at this somewhat lower wage; how much less the government would be paying out in unemployment compensation and import adjustment assistance; how much lower US auto prices might be; how many fewer imports would be sold, or how much less federal bail-out aid and bank loans the industry would need. But the auto industry clearly would be better off than it is now.

AMERICAN railroads have teetered on the edge of bankruptcy for the whole decade, with perhaps a dozen going over the edge. Yet wages in this industry have gone up dramatically—from 20 percent higher than the national average in 1970 to 48 percent higher in 1980. During the same decade, rail traffic has stagnated, employment has declined, and federal subsidies have increased. But wages are up to \$10.25 an hour. The annual wage for a rail worker is \$21,300 for a 40-hour week, but work rules lead to a great deal of overtime, and benefits include a separate railroad retirement system more generous than Social Security and long-term employment guarantees unmatched in other industries.

In contrast to wage escalation in these three sick industries, in electronics—the industrial area that has grown most successfully in the US in the last decade—wages were only one percent higher than average in 1970 and are only five percent higher now, at \$7.29 an hour. These statistics make a mockery of the old competitive assumption that healthy and growing industries would offer higher wages while wages would fall in contracting industries. Who would give up a job prospect in the auto industry at \$10.56 an hour (not including benefits) to make semi-conductors and related devices at \$7.16 an hour?

What is dismaying is not just that some powerful groups are escaping the burdens of inflation but that there has been silence about the specifics of this problem from two administrations and no significant call for attention from any other group. The Carter

administration tried various incomes policies such as jawboning and guidelines, but generally attacked prices more than wages. The Reagan administration eschews incomes policy and has abolished the Council on Wage and Price Stability. Yet both Reagan and Carter have instituted what amounts to a secret incomes policy, using tight money and tight budgets to control wage inflation indirectly. This will work if corporations faced with high interest rates and falling sales are unable to raise prices or to pay higher wages. But to the extent this policy does work, it affects wages not just in a few industries where settlements clearly have been out of line, but across the board. Those who suffer most are the last-hired young, black, Hispanic, and women workers who are the first to be fired in an austerity pinch. Meanwhile, politically powerful wage-earners are staying far ahead of their fellow workers despite the decline in their industries.

Unfortunately for the fight against inflation, an indirect attack on wages by the new administration, using fiscal and monetary policy like a blunderbuss, probably will fail, but for reasons other than its inequities. Faced with low profits, tight money, and wage demands that are inflationary, corporations in the auto, steel, railroad, and other industries prefer to seek restraints on competition and subsidies, and even to face huge (in the case of railroads, fatal) losses rather than try to deal with the wage problem alone. Indeed, corporate leaders can say with justification that administrations of both parties have encouraged wage settlements in several key industries to avoid politically risky strikes.

The problem of high-wage, increasingly uncompetitive industries is left out of the debate about inflation because it is a sensitive political issue, especially for liberals. What political party seeking campaign contributions or appealing to the labor vote wants to risk a fight with some of the strongest unions in America? What liberal group wants to offend old allies in the struggle for national health insurance, the minimum wage, civil rights, and education by asking questions about wages, which is what unions are really all about? Even conservatives don't want to jeopardize support for a tough foreign policy or ruin chances for making permanent inroads among blue-collar voters by admitting that some workers' wages are making their industries manifestly non-competitive, and pushing inflation through the whole economy.

The politics of inflation is dangerous. Politically, it is easier to attack budget deficits, oil companies, and supermarket middlemen than steel, auto, and railroad wage settlements. Politicians should try to avoid unnecessary confrontations, but facts are facts. The inflation problem will not go away until wage problems in the heavy industry sector are faced. Moreover, attacks on the budget as the principal cause of inflation are more dangerous to the long-run health and credibility of the political system, because they cannot solve the inflation problem.

Our highest-wage industries are starved for capital and are being subsidized by lower-wage industries. Each of these industries—steel, autos, railroads—would have two billion dollars to \$2.5 billion more per year for modernization if wage increases simply had matched the national average since 1970. Supplier industries and others affected by wage scales in the major companies also would have billions more. Wages in these three industries create exaggerated wage pressures in dozens of other industries, and indeed in whole communities nearby. Sunbelt-frostbelt disparities are intensified because many of the highest-wage industries are located in the industrial midwest. Unreasonable wage arrangements in steel, autos, and railroads drive up costs for dozens of other industries for which steel and transportation are costs.

What's to be done? The United Auto Workers' agreement to moderate its wage demands to save Chrysler suggest that a fight with the unions can be avoided. But both liberals and conservatives have to begin calling for wider wage restraint by the UAW and other unions at companies that are afflicted with Chrysler's problems. Liberals also have to recognize that budget cuts and making scapegoats of the poor are at least partly the result of liberal unwillingness to face the inflationary effects of excessive wage settlements. The budget and the poor, to be sure, are not the most important causes of inflation. But the measure of a liberal should not be support for palliative social programs or the minimum wage. Liberals must insist on wage settlements at the high end of the scale that will reduce inflation and encourage renewed economic growth, which is the best real hope for the poor and for the well-being of our political institutions.

Paul A. London

Paul A. London is a Washington-based economist.

He'd give up his soul if he had one.

Good Soldier Schweiker

In *The Golden Bough*, Sir James George Frazer writes that many primitive tribes have painful, sometimes dangerous rites of puberty. In these rites the child undergoes a symbolic death through an encounter with the tribe's totemic animal. The process is completed when the boy is infused with new life and characteristics drawn from the symbolic creature. This is one way to explain the few short weeks in the summer of 1976 when the soul of liberal Richard Schweiker was taken over by Republican strategist

John Sears. In the process Schweiker's political life came perilously close to ending, but the senator from Pennsylvania reemerged, bearing characteristics of the great conservative father.

Actually Schweiker's rite of passage—his selection as Ronald Reagan's running mate—was so full of drama and intrigue, elements notably lacking in what preceded and followed, that it appears to have been the apex of his political life. But instead of illuminating the man, Schweiker's encounter has cast doubt upon who he was before and what he has become since.

The 94th Congress, which ended in 1976, marked the end of Schweiker's high approval ratings from liberal groups such as the Americans for Democratic Action. In 1977 his ADA rating fell to 15 percent from 80 percent the previous year. It's not hard to see why. During the 94th Congress Schweiker sided with liberals such as Kennedy, Mathias, and Culver to greatly expand the school lunch program, fund three billion dollars in public works, and increase administration proposals for the Department of Labor and HEW by four billion dollars. Goldwater, Laxalt, Garn, and Helms joined the Ford administration in opposing these measures as too expensive.

Schweiker also favored blocking a final go-ahead for the B-1 bomber, increasing Senate oversight of the CIA, barring resumption of arms sales to Turkey, dismantling an existing ABM site, expanding the anti-trust statutes, and limiting construction of the Clinch River breeder reactor. But by the 95th Congress, either the breeder reactor or Schweiker had changed; he now supported its development. He also discovered the strategic necessity of opposing the Panama Canal treaties, increasing defense spending, and fighting Paul Warnke's nomination as SALT negotiator. The erstwhile ERA supporter favored letting state legislators rescind their support of the amendment, and he also opposed the District of Columbia voting rights amendment.

In spite of his shift to the right, Schweiker was not totally remade. His health subcommittee record remained solidly on the side of a large federal role in the health of Americans. During the last Congress he assailed the Carter administration for offering an inadequate increase in the health budget, favored the Health Professions Education Assistance Act, and backed a program to provide counseling, education, and research for sudden infant death syndrome—all in addition to maintaining support for numerous other health research and assistance programs. This makes it curious that as secretary of health and human services, Richard Schweiker is now presiding over the dismantling of many of these federal programs, or according to department watchers, meekly allowing the Office of Management and Budget to do so.

People who have worked with Schweiker for years cannot recall a telling moment that aptly characterizes him. He is invariably described as "dull," "colorless," and "undistinguished." One former labor official says,



Richard Schweiker by Vint Lawrence

"He was a competent and hard-working politician, which in Washington terms is like saying a woman is 'interesting' when describing a blind date."

Because Schweiker is unable to arouse much of a reaction, he doesn't have admirers and detractors in the way politicians usually do; everyone describes him with the same sort of faint praise. His bland personality became an asset, however, when John Sears was looking for a northeastern liberal who presumably could attract that missing constituency to a Reagan candidacy. "As we surveyed the options, he was the best," says Sears. "Jacob Javits and Cliff Case, for example, were too old. We didn't have a lot of time. We didn't want a scandal to develop. And whatever anyone said [about him] good or bad, they all said he was an honest man, whose service had been workmanlike."

Although Schweiker was never an ideological beacon for the left, his position was solidly liberal Republican. His selection as vice presidential candidate did not, as Sears expected, unite his wing of the party with Reagan's. Both liberals and conservatives were confused by and even contemptuous of his sudden transformation ("I don't know anything more traumatic than since we got Schweikerized," said one Reagan delegate), but it did give Schweiker a convenient way to revise his image as a man at odds with the main-

stream of his party. The wariness with which his new image was greeted upon his return to the Senate, and the lure of another shot at the limelight, may have accounted for his brief flirtation with the idea of running for the governorship of Pennsylvania or the presidency (yes, of the United States). To be kind, nothing came of these notions.

ALTHOUGH few people ever paid much attention, Schweiker has demonstrated remarkable prescience in keeping ahead of changes in the mood of the public. His appearance on the enemies list and early call for Nixon's resignation, his opposition to the anti-ballistic missile, and his unshakable support of labor (support which made him the first Republican senator to be endorsed by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO) helped assure his reelection to the Senate in 1974, a year not notable for great Republican victories.

During the Nixon years, Schweiker was a founding member of the Wednesday Club, a group of moderate-to-liberal Republicans whose ranks included Case, Javits, Edward Brooke, Charles Goodell, Mark Hatfield, Charles Percy, and Charles Mathias. The group frequently was at odds with the administration, and, it was reported, "often represent[ed] a decisive factor on crucial Senate votes."

Schweiker spoke about his liberal phase in an interview soon after his announced retirement from the Senate (an announcement that came in 1979, well before anyone knew Ronald Reagan would be president): "Yeah, what's happening to my old friends? They're thinning out. . . . I was two years ahead of the conservative revolt in this country. . . . It's the best asset I've got."

But more often than not, Schweiker and his Senate staff dismissed the notion that Schweiker's views underwent a transformation. They preferred to say that he "revised some of his thinking on the role of government," while pointing to his long-time opposition to gun control and abortion, and to his support of prayer in school, to show he was really always conservative.

Schweiker's failure to articulate a philosophy on which he bases his views, whatever they may be from year to year, has led to charges of opportunism. This is not to say opportunism is an unusual charge to be leveled in Washington. But what disturbs people about Schweiker is that he hasn't had the wit to conceal his opportunism or the grace to come up with some plausible excuse for it.

This absence of a philosophic framework has led to some concern over his role as head of Health and Human Services, the largest government department (it had a budget of \$200 billion in 1980) and one with enormous impact on the daily life of Americans.

At first his appointment was greeted with a sense of relief in the department. "People welcomed him," says Charles Miller, a career civil servant who was asked to postpone voluntary retirement in order to serve tem-

porarily as acting assistant secretary for health. "There was a fear we might get someone very conservative, someone out of sympathy with the programs. He was a known quantity, his views were generally quite good. . . . He's always been a strong supporter of most health programs. I dealt with him [when he was] on the Appropriations Committee. There wasn't any sign of shift."

But there is talk now in the federal health community that except for a successful effort to save most of the budget of the National Institutes of Health, a Schweiker pet, he has not balked at the cuts being dictated by OMB. It would be one thing, say people who have dealt with him over the years, if he had articulated the view that public health programs were best left to the states. But even taking into account Schweiker's recent opposition to national health insurance and hospital cost containment, his Senate career demonstrated a belief that the federal government is largely responsible for setting a standard of public health care because the states would not or could not do so. After all, Schweiker has been dubbed the "patron saint of the pancreas" due to his influence in securing federal funds (about \$135 million last year) for diabetes research.

THERE IS worry, too, that the qualities that made him, by all accounts, one of Capitol Hill's most agreeable senators may not serve him well as the manager of a huge bureaucracy. "He was easy to work with, a decent, likable guy," says one Democratic health subcommittee aide. "We never feared to come into a markup with him on the other side." "His staff in some ways was more effective than he was," says another. "If I needed his cooperation on something, I would sometimes go to him directly and end run his staff."

Reports indicate that Schweiker is being end run by the White House about department personnel decisions. Although Schweiker is a proponent of a constitutional amendment banning abortion, he apparently objected to the appointment of Philadelphia surgeon Dr. C. Everett Koop, a leader in the anti-abortion movement, in part because of Koop's lack of public policy experience. Koop is expected to become surgeon general.

And longtime research advocate Schweiker is also responsible for, or was unable to do anything about, the firing of Dr. Anthony Robbins as head of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. Robbins was dismissed without warning, one-third of the way through his six-year term, and also removed from the career service. "Our statute mandates that we provide research and recommendations on how best to protect workers," Robbins says. "There was always some possibility this administration wouldn't want an active institute." But it strikes Robbins as unusual that even through his last years in the Senate, Schweiker "took a special interest in our work."

When Schweiker unexpectedly announced his Senate retirement more than a year before his 1980 term expired, he said that 20 years as a legislator was enough. Associates said Schweiker wanted to get out while he was still young enough (he's 54) to make a new career for himself, and that he was looking for a management position with a large firm. After all, he helped run the family ceramic tile business in Pennsylvania before getting into politics. Although his reentry into the private sector has been delayed, as HHS secretary he has achieved his goal of managing a large enterprise. And he has the opportunity to direct the department in accordance with his principles and vision. Whatever they may be.

Emily Yoffe

Virtue has its rewards.

Wrong on Human Rights

Jimmy Carter's human rights policy was far from perfect. It was oversold and sanctimonious, and the connection between American self-interest and human rights was never explained adequately. But these flaws do not justify the Reagan administration's wholesale derogation of the Carter policy or its adoption of a stance that seems to ignore human rights.

The Reagan case for reversing Carter policy is based on four premises which have gained wide acceptance, but which seriously misconstrue what the Carter policy was about. Here are the basic charges and the answers to them:

1) *The policy was a moral crusade incompatible with our real national security interests.* This argument fails to consider the potential damage to our national security from excessive support of repressive regimes. Although this support may gain short-run benefits, over the long run such regimes may get overthrown and our support may be resented by those who follow.

US human rights policy has separated us from official repression in countries like Brazil and South Africa. As a result, our interests are more likely to be protected if and when the current government falls. This *realpolitik* aspect of the human rights policy deserves more attention from critics and proponents alike.

2) *We were tough only on our non-communist friends and ignored our Soviet adversaries.* Actually, Soviet human rights abuses were the subject of high-level attention from the earliest days of the Carter administration. It was President Carter who wrote to Andrei Sakharov and welcomed Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the White House (after President Ford had snubbed him) in order

to publicize their harsh treatment by the Soviet government.

At conferences reviewing the Helsinki Accords, at Belgrade in 1978 and at Madrid in 1980, there was heavy pressure from our NATO allies to soft-pedal the human rights issue and avoid any mention of specific cases. But the Carter administration insisted on thorough and detailed review of Soviet violations.

3) *We applied a double standard, cutting off military aid only to non-communist countries.* The answer, of course, is that only non-communist countries are eligible for military aid. Communist countries are not even considered because of both national security and human rights objections (the one exception being Yugoslavia, which gets assistance to help deter a possible Soviet invasion).

The real issue is what circumstances justify military aid to a government engaged in harsh repression of its own people. The Reagan criticism implies that it is enough if the government in question is "friendly" to us. But if no compelling interest of ours is at stake, how can it be morally or politically sound to aid forces that may torture, kill, and imprison innocent people?

4) *The human rights policy destabilized the shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua. If we had only supported those friends they would have remained in power.* The shah and Somoza were victims of profound social and political revolutions that were decades in the making. To say that the human rights policy was responsible for their downfall is to ignore Montesquieu's maxim that "great events have great causes."

And would someone please explain with specifics, instead of with rhetoric, how to save a regime when its people have turned against it? Do the human rights critics advocate the Soviet model of massive armed intervention and brutal repression, as in Afghanistan? If not, how would they have kept the shah and Somoza from being deposed by mass movements of their own people?

There is much evidence that human rights will be jettisoned in the foreign policy of the Reagan administration: the nomination of Ernest Lefevre, an extreme critic of the Carter policy, as assistant secretary of state for human rights; in Secretary of State Haig's statement that "fighting terrorism" would replace human rights as a cornerstone of our diplomacy; and in the decisions to accord a warm welcome to South Korean dictator Chun, to restore some commercial and defense ties with Chile, and to increase military aid to the junta in El Salvador.

But before the Reagan administration consigns the human rights policy to the diplomatic scrap heap, it will have to contend with a pro-human rights bipartisan coalition on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Human rights was the policy of Congress long before Carter's election. Starting in 1973, the House committee initiated human rights legislation which established the State Department bureau, required the submission of annual reports on conditions worldwide, and made the policy a major factor in

decisions on economic and military aid.

This committee voted to reverse Carter administration actions that it felt violated the congressional human rights norms. During the last four years, it eliminated proposed military aid to Guatemala and cut back on the amounts sought for the Philippines and Zaire. It also closely monitored Soviet violations of the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords.

Just a few weeks ago, the Democratic majority on the committee elected activist pro-human rights members to chair three subcommittees dealing with the third world: Harold Wolpe of Michigan for Africa, Stephen Solarz of New York for Asia, and Michael Barnes of Maryland for Latin America. In two instances they were chosen over colleagues who had more seniority but who wanted to downplay human rights.

The committee can be expected to examine skeptically Reagan proposals for military aid to repressive governments. It may also conduct hearings on the long-run dangers to our national security created by unequivocal support for unpopular regimes. In its role as defender of human rights concerns, it could be as significant a voice in foreign policy under President Reagan as the Fulbright Senate Foreign Relations Committee was during the Vietnam War era.

Because of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, predictions that the human rights policy will disappear may be as overstated as the arguments that it should.

Stephen Cohen

Stephen Cohen, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights, now teaches at the Georgetown University Law Center.

NATO may be dangerous to our safety.

Western Insecurity

What is to become of NATO? This was really the critical question that confronted the four distinguished authors of *Western Security*, the latest report on the state of the Western alliance. No ordinary quartet, they are the directors of the four leading councils and institutes on foreign relations in Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States: Karl Kaiser, Thierry de Montbrial, David Watt, and Winston Lord. They were advised by a group of equally distinguished experts from the four countries. Such a collaborative effort had never been made before; it must testify to the acuteness of the problem in the minds of the participants and their organizations. They have produced a report that deserves to be on the desk of every

government leader who might do something about it, though not for the reason that the authors themselves might give.

The problem of NATO is not an outgrowth of present or recent circumstances. It is embedded in NATO's entire history. In question is its very *raison d'être*.

When NATO was formed in 1949, it was a unilateral American guarantee of European security masquerading as an alliance. It was, to be sure, an alliance in form—the United States and the European members pledged to come to one another's defense. In fact, only the United States had the means to defend anyone. On the assumption that overwhelming Soviet superiority in conventional arms could not be overcome conventionally, reliance was put on American strategic superiority—on atomic and later on nuclear weapons. The "ultimate deterrent" more than ever made the alliance a unilateral American guarantee. Another aspect of the North Atlantic Treaty contributed to an American defense monopoly. Geographically, the treaty was explicitly limited; it applied only to the defense of Europe. The United States thus was left to assume full responsibility in the rest of the world. The treaty was also severely limited functionally. It paid lip service to economic collaboration that was never implemented. Later efforts to enlarge the political scope of NATO proved to be equally futile.

In the immediate post-World War II world, all sides wanted to have it this way. Europe—shattered, hungry, fearful—yearned for American protection. The Americans assumed that they would be drawn into a European war in any case. It would be better to get in at the outset than to wait two or three years, as in the past. It would be still better to prevent such a war by removing the temptation of American isolationism. Outside Europe, the United States positively demanded a free hand. Americans justified it on the ground that Europe could have only regional interests; only America had global interests. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger taunted the Europeans with this formula as late as 1973.

The original compact has not remained unchanged. The European members now contribute a large share of the men and materiel for their own defense. In the most important respects, however, little has changed. Because NATO forces are not expected to hold out for more than 90 days in a conventional conflict, ultimate reliance still is put on the "ultimate deterrent" provided by American strategic weapons. Nor have the geographic or functional limits of NATO changed. The security of Europe is still NATO's sole mission. The European members of NATO are, in effect, allies of the United States in their own defense and in no other sense.

The paradox of NATO is that it has contributed to European isolationism, or, of late, to timidly selective isolationism with no risk of real embroilment. What Europe wanted in 1949 was protection against Soviet aggression. What Europe wants in 1981 is exactly the

same thing, no more and no less. The more Europe feels protected, the less it wants to be dragged into crises and conflicts elsewhere. Or as Theo Sommer, a leading German commentator and co-publisher of *Die Zeit*, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's unofficial organ, put it not long ago: "Europe must not become an area of tension because there is tension elsewhere." That is as good a definition of European isolationism as any.

Such European isolationism always was implicit in the Western alliance. It did not matter as long as the United States was able and willing to act unilaterally and did not ask its European allies for help. But toward the end of the Nixon administration and throughout the Carter years this state of affairs changed drastically. The United States increasingly found itself on the asking rather than on the giving end. The Europeans were placed in the novel position of having to decide whether they wanted to give the kind of support, economic, political, and military, that the United States asked for. More often than not, as in the cases of Iran, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, the European response was half-hearted or hostile.

The United States, in effect, called on the alliance to do what it was never intended to do. Yet the United States was never willing to admit that it was demanding a fundamental change in the nature of the alliance. By trying to smuggle in such a change, and failing, the United States missed—or deliberately rejected—the opportunity to call for a basic reassessment of NATO. President Carter himself spoke bitterly of the Europeans as if they had let down the United States. The Europeans reacted sullenly by questioning American motives, stability of policy, and plain good sense. Neither side was willing to bring out into the open what the deeper trouble was—that the covenant of 1949 was based on conditions that no longer existed.

IN 1957 an effort was made to enlarge the scope of NATO by appointing a Committee of Three, made up of Lester Pearson of Canada, Halvard Lange of Norway, and Gaetano Martino of Italy, known as the "Three Wise Men." They brought in a report advocating a much greater degree of political collaboration within the alliance. It never had a chance and died aborning.

What have the "Four Wise Men" brought forth in the new report, *Western Security*? Their analysis of the problem is largely familiar by now, but is not any less disturbing for that reason. The present transatlantic crisis, they say, is not merely one more short-term commotion; it is more far-reaching because it has deeper historical and structural roots. The political and economic balance of power between the United States and Europe has changed, as has the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. The European Community has become as rich as the United States and often outsells the United States in the world market. Yet the "protégé" acts as if nothing has changed: "Europe as a whole remains dependent on

the nuclear guarantee provided by the United States since the end of World War II" and "does not assume the political and military responsibilities which come with its newly acquired economic might." Militarily, in fact, Europe's dependence on the United States may be greater than ever: "As the increased Soviet conventional superiority is no longer compensated by US nuclear superiority at higher rungs of the escalation ladder, the Europeans may have in fact become even more dependent on US first use of nuclear weapons." The last five words could not be more ominous.

In this analysis, which I have necessarily compressed, one point stands out most starkly. It is that "neither the United States nor Europe can be expected to face the challenges of the 1980s on its own." To tell the truth, neither the United States nor Europe was able to face the challenges before the 1980s on its own. The difference is that now the United States officially admits that it cannot. In an address in Munich on February 21 of this year, Deputy Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci stated that the United States cannot "unaided bear the burden of promoting Western interests beyond Europe." Since the United States cannot bear the burden alone in Europe either, and Europe can or will do even less by itself, there is general agreement that the challenges in Europe and beyond Europe must be borne by both or by neither.

THE ONLY instrumentality the United States and Europe have with which to face this issue is still NATO. One would imagine that the authors of *Western Security* would have NATO in mind as the means to achieve equal and joint challenge-facing and burden-bearing. Unfortunately, NATO has become something of a sacred cow which cannot be given up even if it turns out that NATO cannot be trusted to do the job.

This report skirts the issue instead of attacking it frontally. At first we are told that "NATO must for the first time become a real alliance, not just one characterized by US dominance and European passivity." This is refreshing realism: NATO was never a real alliance and, by implication, should start life afresh as a real alliance and face up to the challenges of the 1980s. But before they get through, the authors have second thoughts about NATO's ability to meet those challenges. In the end, they decide *not* to propose that NATO should change any of its major institutional arrangements with respect to the third world, that is to say, outside Europe. To make any such innovations would require fundamental amendment of the North Atlantic Treaty by 15 parliaments, evidently a hopeless prospect. With no real change in sight, the report settles for a reaffirmation of NATO's prime purpose to defend the territories of its member states.

If this report had stopped there, its interest would have been limited. Happily, it does not stop until it puts forward a genuinely new proposal, or rather a new version of an old one. In 1958 President Charles de

Gaulle made a proposal for a directorate comprising the United States, Great Britain, and France to shape the global policies of the Western alliance. It was airily rejected by President Eisenhower, because the United States at that time had no intention of sharing global power. Now the authors of *Western Security* have superficially resurrected the basic Gaullist idea, added two other members to the directorate, Germany and Japan, and renamed it "principal nation groups." The report is likely to be remembered, if at all, for this idea.

The new set-up, however, is not what de Gaulle had in mind. His directorate was global in conception. The "principal nation groups" are to be regional and are to be brought into existence to deal with the third world. Some groups might be temporary, some quasi-permanent. Some might vary in membership, depending on the area, but the Big Five usually would make up the "core group" in all of them. Only one is recommended for immediate formation—to deal with the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia regions. Only the Big Five are mentioned as eligible for this one. Other groups might deal with a crisis in the Mediterranean and bring in Italy, or one in the Pacific and bring in Canada and Australia. The functions allotted to them are "crisis management and joint assessments," entailing exchange of information and contingency planning on a regular basis.

In all, this report envisages a three-tiered arrangement. Two of the tiers are already in existence. One is NATO, which would continue to be preoccupied with East-West relations. The second is the seven-nation summits of the advanced industrialized nations, begun in 1975, which deal mainly with economic matters, and of which the authors evidently do not have a high opinion. The new set-up would be put on top of these in order to deal specifically with "political and security developments in the Third World." The authors carefully stipulate that the new groups should be kept separate from NATO and merely keep NATO and the European Community "closely informed." In the end, the authors of the report have nothing less in mind than "a new transatlantic bargain" and a "restructuring" of the Western alliance.

CAN THIS scheme be taken seriously? I doubt it. It is bureaucratically overloaded and top-heavy. Some top officials might have little time left over from going to and from meetings of NATO, the seven-nation summits, and the new "principal nation

groups." If the Western alliance needs to strike a new bargain and to be restructured, the reason is political rather than organizational. If the European members had the will to act in concert with the United States outside the NATO area in the principal nation groups, they would find a way to do so within a renegotiated and restructured NATO. Instead, the new set-up asks the Europeans to do outside NATO what they refuse to do inside. Changing the venue of this problem does not solve it or make it easier to solve.

WHAT IS the likelihood that, say, France and Germany would agree to act in concert with the US outside the NATO area if they could do so in principal nation groups? The likelihood is just as slim as it is now. NATO today suits what they conceive to be their national and continental interest. It was set up in their defense, and they want it to stay that way. European isolationism has far deeper roots than this scheme is willing to face. Europe did not become isolationist in a fit of absent-mindedness or by a mental aberration. European isolationism may be dangerous and shortsighted, but it is deliberate and deep-seated.

The proposed set-up suffers from another flaw. It implicitly assumes that East-West relations can be separated from third world relations. The scheme is speciously based on a division of labor between NATO and the principal nation groups. But what if a Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia crisis impinges on Soviet-American interests, as it almost certainly will, in the manner of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973? One must imagine that the European members would do their utmost to stay out of that area of tension in NATO and get into it in a principal nation group. The suggestion that there might be a principal nation group for a crisis in the Mediterranean is an even more far-fetched version of the division of labor. Has the Mediterranean been moved to the third world so that it may come within the area of a principal nation group? Is it realistic to imagine that Japan would participate in a principal nation group for the Mediterranean or Germany in one for the Pacific?

I refuse to believe that our Four Wise Men and their advisers were not wise enough to see the incongruities and contradictions in their plan. What, then, impelled them to put it forward? I suspect that the answer is practical, not theoretical. NATO, it is clear, has become an obstacle to clear thinking and rational policy. Yet we can neither get rid of it nor reform it. The next best thing is to make an end run around it. The principal nation groups exactly serve this purpose. If ever they were to materialize, it would soon be evident that they were taking over responsibility for whatever and wherever the real action was. In practice, it hardly would matter anymore whether NATO survived or not. What would matter is what the Big Five chose to do in their principal nation group.

The trouble with this strategy is that it belongs in

Coming:
The Truth About Charles Darwin.

the too-smart-by-half department of foreign policy. The authors of this report never confront the hard questions their plan evokes. They expect West European nations to make a large contribution to the defense of Western interests outside NATO, but they do not tell the reader why the same nations refuse to do so inside NATO. One is never made to understand why the West European nations are so inhibited about moving out of the NATO area, as if all they needed to get themselves moving was an organizational gimmick that would bypass NATO. The report is brave enough to say flatly that "present institutions are inadequate and at times lack relevance for 1980s" without being bold enough to ask why inadequate and sometimes irrelevant institutions must be maintained or cannot be drastically revised.

Nevertheless, *Western Security* is an important and significant effort, even where it is weakest. It reflects a concern for Western insecurity far more than it contributes to Western security. It suggests that even this high-powered foursome has just about given up on NATO, cannot figure out how to make it adequate and relevant for the 1980s, and thinks we must take refuge in "new mechanisms for truly collective decision-

making." Its proposal for new mechanisms may be just what the patient needs, but the patient is unlikely to be receptive as long as he holds on to the nostrum of the old mechanisms. This report brings out the real problem most eloquently by trying to evade it.

The issue is whether Western Europe and the United States can act together wherever their collective interests are threatened, in Europe or elsewhere. Now that the United States admittedly cannot take care of "elsewhere" alone, except in the most local, one-sided circumstances, NATO is not enough. The great merit of this report is that it recognizes this state of affairs and tries to do something about it. However, it refuses to say outright that NATO—or at least the peculiar type of European isolationism typified by NATO—blocks the way. It tells us where we want to go, but until we openly face why we have been unable to go there, we are not likely to make any progress.

Theodore Draper

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Reviving federalism is no way to get the government off our backs.

The Withering Away of the States

by Michael Kinsley

Speaking of the glories of federalism, as President Reagan has been doing lately, have you heard the one about Howard Hughes? Hughes was born and raised in Texas. He spent most of his adult life and made most of his fortune in California. Then he bought up a large chunk of Las Vegas (that's in Nevada) and moved into a hotel there. He spent his last few years flitting mysteriously around the world, and was on a plane heading back to Texas when he died in 1976.

In our glorious federal system, inheritance is one of many matters left entirely to state law and state courts. Now then. Who was to run Hughes's vast business empire while his affairs were being settled? Each of these "united" states has its own complex rules and precedents on this question. Each state also has its own rules and precedents about which state's rules and precedents to follow. Hughes's relatives persuaded a court in Delaware to appoint one of them administrator. Delaware? Almost all of Hughes's

assets were in a company called Summa Corporation. Each state makes its own laws governing corporations, and Delaware turns a pretty penny making its own laws the most accommodating. So Summa, like most major US corporations (General Motors, *The New Republic*, and so on), is incorporated in Delaware. But the stock certificate reflecting Hughes's ownership of Summa was in the Bank of America headquarters in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is in California. So a California official challenged Delaware's right to appoint an administrator. Litigation ensued.

Meanwhile, the famous "Mormon will" popped up. In Utah. Wills must be approved by the state where the decedent was "domiciled" and by every state where his assets are located. Where was Hughes "domiciled"? Unclear. A court in Nevada held a trial and ruled that the will was a fake. Then the issue had to be retried in California. And again in Texas. Since all three states came to the same conclusion, that the Mormon will

was a fake, that particular issue was finally settled last month after only five brisk years of litigation.

So Howard Hughes died without a will. Each state, naturally, has its own set of rules about what happens in such a case. California and Nevada have the same rules, but Texas's rules are different. The states are in miraculous agreement on the general rules about whose rules should apply, but each state has its own doctrines and precedents on specific cases, and each applies them in its own courts. Believe it or not, Hughes's relatives settled this one among themselves without litigation! There was plenty to go around.

But wait. There is the matter of inheritance taxes. The federal government has one. So do most of the states. For this reason, Texas and California both claim the late Mr. Hughes as one of their own. Delaware (remember Delaware?) also has designs. All of these taxes would add up to more than 100 percent of the estate. Nevada has no death tax; the heirs are convinced that cousin Howard always thought of Las Vegas as "home." This issue has been bouncing around the country like a billiard ball. In 1978 a Texas jury determined in a Texas court that Hughes was a Texan. California was unpersuaded. It asked the US Supreme Court to decide.

IN NATIONS not blessed with a federal system, there is a sad scarcity of courts and a straightforward hierarchy among them. In this country there are 51 independent court systems, and the relationship among them is one of infinite complexity and beautiful subtlety of doctrine, weaved by legal artisans over 200 years. The US Supreme Court decided that it did not have the power to decide the Hughes case, but several justices suggested that a federal district court could decide it. A federal district court in Texas decided that it could not decide. Then a federal appeals court decided that the district court could, too, decide. California has asked the Supreme Court to decide that the Texas district court cannot decide after all. If the district court does ultimately decide, the matter will then head up to the Supreme Court for the third time.

How many lawyers have been involved in all this? "Literally hundreds," says one of them. At what cost? Reticent pause. Millions and millions? "Oh, certainly." The conclusion is several years away.

We don't all face the problem of being heirs to Howard Hughes's fortune, but we all suffer the nuisance of living in a federal system. Now President Reagan wants to reverse the trend of 200 years and give the states a larger role in governing our lives. He hasn't yet explained why. It's clear he wants less government *in toto*, but how will shifting functions between levels of government achieve this? Some see racist intent in Reagan's revival of the term "states rights." Others argue that transferring social services "back" to the states, which never provided them in the first place, is just a sneaky way of canceling them. Reagan's people insist otherwise. But if Reagan really thinks that

transferring functions and authority from Washington to the states is a sensible way to make government more efficient, more responsive, less obtrusive, and so on, he should consider how federalism really works in 1981. Anyone truly concerned about making America more productive, more democratic, less wasteful, less bureaucratic, would want to hasten the withering away of the states as quickly as possible.

Everyone knows, for example, that America fritters away far too much brainpower on legal matters while the Japanese are inventing computers that design robots that build automobiles and so on. One main reason is federalism. Half of the standard three-year legal education could be wiped out if we had a single government with a single set of courts administering a single set of laws. Almost that many lawyers could be wiped out, too. There are elaborate constitutional doctrines about what the states can and cannot do because they are joined in a nation, and what the central government can and cannot do because we are 50 sovereign states. The gears of litigation grind endlessly over what court a particular quarrel belongs in and what law that court should apply. (Should a federal court sitting in Minnesota use Indiana conflict-of-law rules to decide whether an Ohio automobile guest statute should apply to a crash in Texas between a car from Alabama driven by a Louisiana woman and a truck owned by a Delaware corporation? That sort of thing.) This country also makes many important governmental decisions through the awkward and costly procedure of letting the states and the federal government sue one another. Unfortunately, in this litigation-crazed nation, agencies of the federal government regularly sue one another, so eliminating the states wouldn't eliminate this problem. But it would help.

On most important matters, each state makes its own laws and settles its own arguments. When a large airplane crashes, for example, lawyers may have the pleasure of debating the safety of some wing bolt or cargo hatch in dozens of courts and of researching obscure doctrines of negligence under dozens of independent legal systems. Every law student learns to quote Mr. Justice Brandeis about why this is a good thing: "It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country." Its citizens seldom so choose. Instead, there is something called the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, which has been beaver-ing since 1892 to bring about some kind of consistency in matters on which there is no earthly reason why the states need to disagree. Some of the commission's monuments include the Uniform Simultaneous Death Act, the Uniform Facsimile Signatures of Public Officials Act, the Uniform Division of Income for Tax Purposes Act, and so on. This last one, for example, tackles the fascinating question of how to

apportion the income of a multistate corporation for the purpose of collecting state income taxes. The Uniform Commissioners struggled bravely and here, in part, is the formula they came up with:

Section 9. All business income shall be apportioned to this state by multiplying the income by a fraction, the numerator of which is the property factor plus the payroll factor plus the sales factor, and the denominator of which is three.

Section 10. The property factor is a fraction, the numerator of which is the average value of the taxpayer's real and tangible personal property owned or rented and used in this state during the tax period and the denominator of which is the average value of all the taxpayer's real and tangible personal property owned or rented and used during the tax period.

Unfortunately, no state is required to accept UDITPA or the other uniform acts, and those that do generally fiddle with them first.

Mr. Reagan, with his fondness for bromides, probably believes in equal justice under the law. Federalism makes this impossible in the United States. A recent survey by the *National Law Journal* found that an American will spend more time in prison for robbery in South Carolina than for willful homicide in half a dozen other states; that the average felony conviction leads to 13 months of jail in South Dakota and 58 months in Massachusetts; and so on. The biggest disparity is that some states have capital punishment and others don't.

ANYONE who believes that enhancing federalism is a sensible way to reduce the cost of government should look up "national" and "state" in that great political science treatise, the Washington, DC, telephone book. The founding fathers thought that the Senate could adequately represent the interests of the states to one another and the central government. Reagan may think that's still how it works. In fact, untold millions are spent every year in the attempt to coordinate 50 sovereignties within a single nation.

Thirty-two state governments, at last count, have offices in Washington. Many of these are located in the "Hall of the States," an office building on Capitol Hill that also houses the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures. But that's just the beginning. The state of California has 21 separate governmental offices in Washington. They include the state office itself, with a dozen staff members ("middle-sized," says one of them), and offices for Alameda County, Los Angeles County, San Bernadino County, San Diego County, Santa Clara County, Inglewood County, the California County Supervisors Association, Los Angeles City, six other cities and city groupings, the League of California Cities, the California university, state college, and community college systems, the California Department of Education, and the California legislature.

Besides the governors and state legislatures, there are separate National Associations (or "Assemblies" or "Conferences" or "Centers" or Leagues") of (or "for" or "on"): Community Arts Agencies, State Art Agencies, State Units on Aging, Conservation Districts, Consumer Agency Administrators, Counties (downtown and Capitol Hill branches), Criminal Justice Planning Directors, Government Communicators, Regional Councils, State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, State Aviation Officials, State Boards of Education, State Boating Law Administrators, State Budget Officers, State Credit Union Supervisors, State Departments of Agriculture, State Development Agencies, State Directors of Special Education, State Lotteries, State Mental Health Program Directors, State Mental Retardation Program Directors, State Savings and Loan Supervisors, State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, Tax Administrators, Towns and Township Officials, Urban Flood Management Agencies, City Councilmen, State Courts, and so on. And then there is the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, a creature of the federal government itself, with a staff of 37 dedicated to grinding out fat reports on federalish topics. It may be expected to survive the Stockman ax.

Well, this is a big and complicated country, federalism or no. But these offices don't replace the coordinating function of a single central government. Most of them duplicate a whole hierarchy of federal offices on matters like historic preservation, mental health, criminal justice, and so on. These state offices generally perform two functions. One is to deal with the special problems created by federalism: 50 separate buildings codes, professional licensing procedures, criminal records systems. A more important function is to lobby the federal government.

Reagan and his people seem vividly aware of how "special interest groups" thwart the functioning of democracy, clog the wheels of government, and subvert the assertion of the general will. But they seem unaware of how much federalism aggravates this problem. It turns lower levels of government from units on an established hierarchy into independent duchies, free to join with or join battle with all the other special interests. If, say, federal mental health bureaucrats want to protect or expand their turf, they must more or less go through channels, and in theory someone may even give them a fairly expeditious "no." State mental health bureaucrats may open a Washington office, hire professional lobbyists, and, if all else fails, start filing lawsuits. The people who pay state taxes are the same ones who pay federal taxes, yet the question of how much our society as a whole should spend on mental health or criminal justice or historical preservation gets made by various governmental units slugging it out as if they had nothing to do with one another. Millions of your state tax dollars are being spent every day in efforts to affect how your federal tax dollars are spent, while millions of your federal tax

dollars are spent fending them off. This is efficient government?

Speaking of your taxes, federalism makes a mess of them. Having different levels of government raising revenues independently not only makes life needlessly complicated. Taxation depends on the government having a monopoly. A rational and fair tax system is impossible when governments must compete with one another. The growth of multinational corporations has made this an insoluble problem among nations. The Balkanization of our tax system creates a perfectly needless problem in this country.

EVERY STATE has an office called something like the Industrial Development Division. The job of these offices is to entice business into the state—sometimes from abroad, but usually from other states. The main weapon is tax favors. A thick packet from the state of Michigan, for example, promises “significant tax incentives” to industries setting up in Michigan. These include exemptions from property tax for up to 12 years, a modified corporate income tax, special exemptions for things like pollution control equipment, and so on. Michigan, like most states, also offers to raise money through federal tax-exempt bonds and relend it to corporations that settle there. Thus ordinary, stationary taxpayers finance this competition through both their state and their federal taxes.

The March 10 *New York Times* contained a full-page ad from the New York State Department of Commerce asserting in 144-point type, “NEW YORK VOTES ‘YES’ FOR BUSINESS,” and bragging about all the taxes that have been lowered to make New York “the best place in the world to do business.” The same paper had a page-one article about how just one of these tax breaks is costing the state \$100 million a year with no perceptible benefit. Certainly very little new business is generated by the nation as a whole by letting corporations play the state legislatures off against one another. In fact, the process undoubtedly makes our economy less efficient and less productive by adding artificial considerations to business investment decisions. A company that ought to be locating a new plant near its suppliers or near its markets will instead plunk it down in whatever state is temporarily ahead in the game of tax-incentive leap-frog.

State-level regulation of business creates similar absurdities. On the one hand, an entrepreneur (and we’re all terribly solicitous of entrepreneurs these days) who wishes to raise money for a new product must hire a lawyer to shepherd his scheme through 51 different securities regulatory systems. Hardly good for productivity. And when you’re following a truck on the interstate highway, you may observe the consequence of federalism plastered all over its rear end.

On the other hand, federalism makes sensible regulations impossible to apply and enforce. There are two reasons for this. First, we do have open state borders, for the moment, and air and water currents remain

unimpressed by the doctrine of states rights. This means that matters like gun control and pollution standards simply cannot be addressed on the state level. Assertions by Reagan people that they should be are simply fatuous. Second, regulation, like taxation, must be a monopoly to work right. This may sound undemocratic, but it’s actually the essence of democracy. Almost everybody in the country might agree that a certain regulation is desirable, but no state will be able to pass it for fear of losing business.

The catalog of bribes sent out to business prospects by the Texas Industrial Commission contains the usual promises about “one of the most favorable tax systems in the entire U.S.,” industrial development loans, lack of troublesome regulations, and so on. It adds an interesting twist with a discussion of the severance tax (the tax on minerals extracted from the ground) on gas and oil wells:

Although the number of Texas firms subject to severance tax is relatively small, the revenues provided are significant and are at least partially responsible for the favorable tax structure industry enjoys. In 1979 Texas collected \$1,025,550,000 in severance taxes. While this tax accounted for more than 17% of the state’s total tax revenue, it also represented 35% of all severance taxes collected in the United States.

In other words, Texas is able to entice business from other states by keeping taxes low and offering other inducements like free job-training programs because it happens to have lots of oil. Is it rational and productive, is it the best way to stimulate growth and jobs, is it one of the glories of federalism, that businesses having nothing to do with oil should be bribed away from the job-hungry northeast by the use of oil revenues?

FEDERALISM makes the government a much better deal for some people than for others. This is not a question of letting local areas decide how much government they want. Government Balkanization lets some people get more services for less money. This can be seen most clearly in metropolitan areas, where rich suburbs are able to have lower tax rates but higher per-capita expenditures than central cities, which often must support area-wide services like museums and zoos. But there are equally dramatic disparities across the nation. For example, while the New York state and city university systems are raising tuition and cutting back on services, the University of Texas is keeping tuition low and has embarked on a lavish building program. This is not because the people of Texas have democratically decided to tax themselves more heavily to support higher education, but because late in the last century the Texas legislature assigned the universities some useless grazing land, which turned out to contain oil. As a result, the “Permanent Fund” shared by UT and Texas A&M is \$1.3 billion (larger than Harvard’s endowment) and growing fast.

The energy crisis has dramatized what was previously a rather academic question: who should bene-

fit from the great mineral wealth of this country? Obviously the main beneficiaries are those lucky enough to own some of it. But often it is owned by the government, and even when it isn't, the government can and does appropriate some of it through taxes for the benefit of . . . whom? Everybody in society? or just those who happen to live nearby? Right now, the system goes out of its way to keep the benefits nearby. For example, as coal production gears up in the west, various states are applying stiff severance taxes to coal mined on *federal* land. Meanwhile, the federal windfall profits tax *exempts* all oil produced on *state-owned* land. Why?

PRESIDENT REAGAN not only is untroubled by anomalies like this, he wants to increase them. He has claimed "a very warm feeling in my heart for the 'sagebrush rebellion,'" and has endorsed that movement's principal aim, which is to transfer vast areas of federal land—much of it with valuable resources—to state ownership. This is bad policy and, worse, it is bad leadership. It feeds a dangerous growth in geographical chauvinism. Regional pride is a fine thing, but that is not what is behind the recent developments like the sagebrush rebellion, Alaska's scheme to rebate oil money based on how many years people have lived there, Texas bumper stickers that say "Let 'Em Freeze in the Dark," or proposed state laws in the industrial midwest that would forbid plants to move elsewhere. Economic stress is eroding our feeling of national community. The president should be trying to reinforce it, working to apportion the suffering and benefit equitably. Instead, Reagan is encouraging insularity and grabbiness.

Why is he doing this? Reagan claims to believe that, to the extent we must have government, state government is inherently more efficient than the federal government, and less prone to the dreaded waste, fraud, and abuse. There is no evidence to support this belief. All the growth in government employment in recent years has come on the state and local level. In 1960 there were 2.3 million people working for the federal government. In 1979 there were 2.8 million. By contrast in 1960 there were over six million state and local government employees, and today there are almost 13 million. State and local government, in other words, have more than doubled over the past two decades, while the federal bureaucracy has increased by less than 20 percent.

Anyone who reads almost any local paper will find the notion laughable that state government is better run than the national government. One of my local papers is the *Washington Post*. It covers two state governments and one jurisdiction that would like to be a state, and certainly has taken to behaving like one. In the first four days of March, the *Post Metro* section contained the following stories:

—"Study Says Most City Assessments Wrong," reporting that more than two-thirds of residential

properties in the District of Columbia are assessed inaccurately.

—"Ethical Considerations in Annapolis," about a Maryland state legislator, also a tavern owner, who is sponsoring a bill to forbid teenagers from buying alcohol anywhere except in a tavern. "His case is far from isolated," says the article. "This year, as always in this part-time legislature, there are tavern owners sponsoring drinking bills, insurance agents promoting eased guidelines for their work, and lawyers and doctors whose bills would increase the business and benefits of their professions." Mention is made of a "thick new ethics law" passed last year.

—"2 Figures in Probe Get New Posts," about how the chairman and staff director of the DC Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, both being investigated by a federal grand jury for bribery and extortion, were given new city jobs with full pay.

—"City Housing Rehabilitation Unit Stripped of Funding," about a DC agency accused of "an alleged history of program foul-ups, shoddy construction, staff conflicts of interest with private contractors and improper use of city money."

—"Bill to Lower Probate Fees Opposed," about how lawyers in the Maryland legislature are preventing cheaper administration of wills.

In four whole days, there was not a single story of corruption, stupidity, waste, or other outrage by the state of Virginia! And, mind you, the Richmond legislature *was* in session. Perhaps we should turn the federal government over to Virginia.

OR PERHAPS we should drop it. Federalism, I mean. It was great fun, but it was just one of those things. We don't need to do anything so drastic as abolishing the states. They could remain as reservoirs of sentiment and employers of last resort for people's brothers-in-law. But billions could be saved by both the government and the private sector if we were to nationalize huge chunks of the law such as negligence, incorporation and business regulation, and professional licensing. Justice and economy would be served by unifying the court system and the punishment of crime. A single national taxing authority would put thousands of lawyers and accountants out of work. (States could still set their own tax rates, but Uncle Sam would make the rules and do the collecting for everybody.) National authority over social concerns like welfare and environmental rules would assure that society as a whole makes rational, democratic decisions about issues that affect society as a whole.

At the very least, someone should sit down with President Reagan and explain to him that he is confounding his great and universal theme of the individual versus government with the issues emerging from a particular historical oddity. It will be no triumph for freedom to get the federal government off our backs, only to have 50 state governments climb back on.

Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Womanhood

A memorable "first." In a new Hungarian film the heroine becomes pregnant, and the picture ends with the birth: we see the actress of the role actually giving birth to a baby. Childbirth scenes as such are not novel; they've been used in documentaries ever since Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and occasionally in fiction films, such as Le Chanois's *Case of Dr. Laurent* (1957). In the latter, shots of a birth by another woman were intercut with shots of the actress's face. Not here. In *Nine Months* we see Lili Monori naked with swollen belly, then we see her on a bed in labor, and the camera pans down her body to her son's appearance in the world.

The director, Márta Mészáros, who wrote the script with Gyula Hernádi and Ildiko Koródy, says that the birth sequence was shot first; later, they did the bulk of the picture, the (fictional) material leading up to the birth. Mészáros doesn't say whether the idea for the heroine's pregnancy came from the fact that Monori became pregnant while they were writing, but if that was so, why not? Many an artwork has its form because of circumstances around it. Monori was willing to have the birth filmed, so they put it in.

The difficulty with the sequence is not a feeling of exploitation, no trace of it, but that the birth is a different order of reality from the rest of the film's reality. Until then we've had the lovely double truth of Monori's acting: the truth of the actress plus the truth of the woman she is playing. In the birth sequence, the second truth disappears and we have Monori alone. It disrupts the texture of the film—but only for a time. Afterward, it becomes supportive: retrospect makes us consider that if Monori was willing to have the birth photographed, it was as an act of confidence in the film, the director, the

theme; that her decision to let it be photographed—not the birth itself—was one of the many decisions she made about her performance.

Monori and the man who plays her lover, Jan Nowicki, are in the Mészáros film *Women* which has already played here but was made in 1977, a year after *Nine Months*, which has just arrived. Since then the pair have made a third film with Mészáros, with whom they clearly work congenially. Nowicki is a Pole—in *Nine Months* he spoke Polish which was then dubbed in Hungarian—and is the kind of actor who delivers more or less what he promises in the first minute or so. In that first minute Nowicki, with lean grim face and manner, promises quiet complexity, bitterness, contained force, nothing like as overwhelming as Jean Gabin but along those lines. When the role calls on him to "give," he does it, credibly, but never with blinding flashes of unsuspected emotional power. He is certainly not dully predictable, neither is he an actor of surprises or enlargements.

Monori is the opposite of him. Her first minutes promise little: a pudgy, round face with the tablatore neither of beauty nor of a strong actor's "mask," with only the cautious confidence of a cat who has learned to look out for herself. Then she starts to grow, and she keeps growing. When she breaks into a smile, the face changes more than most faces change with a smile: wholly different prospects of self appear. Her instinct for oddness, which is really an instinct for verity under acting cliché, gives that doughnut face a range of color—of sexiness, too—that is moving, even a little shaming of us because we expected less. Monori has an inner self that marries with the inner self of the woman she is playing, and that marriage triumphs through her un-

promising face. Some beautiful actresses have that talent, of course, but to see the tradition of beauty in film actresses flouted so justifiably, so beneficially to us, is like seeing a blow for authenticity as against protocol.

Monori has a scene near the end in a new apartment, just before she has her child, just after she has left her lover and the job and town where she lived. She has been shown the new place where she will work after she gives birth, has been shown her new flat. She likes both. Now she is left alone in the empty place, and she sits on the window sill. Everything in her that has been struggling against the strength of her suppression, everything she hasn't wanted to admit feeling because admission isn't going to help her at all right now—the hurt and fear and increased loneliness—all these things flood through her as she sits there. It's like a separate small film contained within the larger one, shown only on her face. I haven't seen anything like it—a kind of silent solo drama—since some of the work that Liv Ullmann did for Ingmar Bergman. I'll remember the childbirth in *Nine Months* for reasons stated, but what I'll treasure from the picture is that window sill sequence.

Mészáros, to judge by the two films shown here, wants to explore womanhood, the reaches and possibilities for a contemporary human being who is female. What's especially interesting about her is that her views on women don't appear to be doctrinaire and the society in which she works is doctrinaire, one of its doctrines being egalitarianism. *Nine Months* is binary, inter-

Films Worth Seeing

Les Bons Débarras (Good Riddance). Exceptional French-Canadian film about a 13-year-old girl's unscrupulous fight to preserve the love between her mother and herself.

Oblomov. Goncharov's great novel pretty well realized in a dreamy, finely acted Soviet film.

One Wild Moment. The wild moment—between a 44-year-old man and his friend's 17-year-old daughter—leads to profound if unavoidably comic complications.

Raging Bull. An Italian-American boxer fills the screen with modulated but incessant fury. Power.

SK

woven. We get the life of industrial workers, dramatized through the encounter of a foreman and a new woman worker. As he woos her, with much discouragement from her at the start, in the plant and in the nearby restaurant, as they move around the neighborhood and encounter his mother and his friends, the rhythms and aspects of the small city's life are made manifest. In this sense, the story is a libretto for the score of the environment.

But also, by following the story, we get an anatomy of the moral climate in the new social order, a mixture of puritanism and license. Nowicki trails Monori one Sunday and discovers that this independent, free-thinking woman has a small son (an earlier child) who lives with Monori's mother; later he learns that the father is a former teacher of Monori's, a married man. This shocks Nowicki, but eventually he's able to accept it as long as she keeps it a secret until they are married and have moved into the house he is still finishing. When one day she visits the unfinished house and finds five of his friends there, she is rather forcibly invited to make a sixth for an orgy, but gets away. When she is studying for her final exams in agriculture, Nowicki nags at her for attention and questions the worth of her studying if she's going to be his wife and keep their house for them. (She passes, well.) When he and she and his mother and relatives are putting final touches on the house, a remark is made that forces Monori to tell them about her child. His mother and relatives call her a whore. She, though pregnant, leaves Nowicki and this town—to live her life as she chooses. The one note of hope is that he is sufficiently shaken so that he may in time see her value, her honor. The picture combines the survival of bourgeois liberalism and its pathetic attempts at depravity along with the survival of a bourgeois puritanism that the new order apparently encourages as one more kind of regimen.

The combination of themes makes clear that a life for women equally free with men's life still lies ahead in communist states as well as elsewhere. Mészáros has realized her film without didactics, with fluency and vividness, and with Monori's performance. The title has the right neatness: it describes the story, and it suggests a truth under it—birth of a different sort.

Once again the first few moments of a film are a tip-off about its subsequent quality. The first shot of *Back Roads*

shows us the crossed legs and spike-heel shoes of a woman leaning against a pillar in the street. Honky-tonk music in the background. Garish red light falls on her legs. Could this woman, er, possibly be a prostitute?

The picture never recovers—not sufficiently, anyway—from the corn of this opening. It was directed by Martin Ritt, photographed by John A. Alonso, and stars Sally Field, all of whom did exceptionally good work in *Norma Rae*, so the banality and floundering here are painful.

The script by Gary DeVore is based on one of those situations that need an awful lot of fleshing out to justify the gimmick that made all the executives snap their fingers when they heard it in the conference room. DeVore does not come through. Field is a hustler who has to leave town (Mobile) with a shiftless boxer, Tommy Lee Jones. They head for California, with virtually no money. They have various adventures. He has to do a little boxing to get some cash, she has to do some hustling. She loses heart about the journey. They split; they rejoin. At the end, they are standing beside a road, trying to thumb a ride to El Dorado.

It's supposed to be a love song of the gutter, a comic poem flourishing amidst

sleaze. No go. For one thing, the script is very conscious, almost patronizing, of the hidden Beauty in the two waifs' souls. For another, the writing and characterization are all dilutions of familiar latter-day-southern. (Ritt's career shows a belief that the south is the place where the really exciting action is, in this country.) For a third, the adventures are tedious, hokey, and don't generate any depth, any compensation for the basic familiarity of the film's terrain. Field does well enough what she has to do, but the part is locked into platitude. Jones has a taking, frowzy breeziness, which helps his warmed-over role, but not enough.

One moment is lovely: a nighttime shot of a bus rolling across the flatlands of Louisiana. Ritt holds the shot until the tail lights of the bus wink away into darkness. The night, the immensity of the space, the lights taking a cabin full of people into the dark and leaving only huge blackness behind, all catch some of the feeling about America that drove Thomas Wolfe crazy.

But, I'm sorry to say because of Ritt's and Field's past work, there's not much else. A few years ago CBS and ABC formed companies to make theatrical films. This is the first, from CBS. I hope onward will be upward.

Robert Brustein on theater

A Theater Marking Time

I'd like to bring you good news of the New York theater, but thus far it's been a peculiar season—full of events, all right, but oddly lacking in purpose or direction. We Americans can always be counted on for energy, electricity, dazzle, but we sometimes find it more difficult to provide a plausible goal for our activity.

One expects this of the commercial stage, whose primary function is entertainment, but it is now becoming a problem of the serious theater as well. Off Broadway, one is accustomed to expect not technical expertise but reach and daring. Most of the shows I've been recently watching there, paradoxically, have possessed enough polish to brighten a furniture showroom; what's missing is their customary edge and meaning. We may be in danger of forgetting the reason for doing plays—

confusing the dancer with the dance, sacrificing dramatic opportunities for an opportunistic choreography.

Richard Foreman's *Penguin Touquet* is all choreography. Foreman is a gifted theater artist with a brilliant visual sense, but here he seems to be guiding a well-trained ensemble on an essentially aimless tour. Trapped inside Heidi Landesman's wonderfully suggestive setting, Foreman's heroine, Agatha, grapples with her dream life, eluding psychoanalysts and saxophone players, consuming fish soup, suffering nosebleeds, and finally confronting a bevy of man-size penguins from another planet who offer her the possibility of changing the conditions of her life. It is idle to analyze a dream collage so remorselessly bent on separating thought from imagination. But what prevents the mind from foundering in these endless non-sequi-

turs is one's effort to identify the various influences on Foreman's imagery: Luis Buñuel, *Zéro de Conduite*, Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, Ionesco, and above all, Lewis Carroll, whose lobster quadrille serves as the inspiration, I suspect, for Foreman's mystifying notion of a "penguin touquet." The whole cast—especially David Warrilow, looking like an avante-garde Basil Rathbone, and Kate Mannheim, playing Agatha like Judy Holiday doing Alice in Wonderland—performs its tasks with verve and dispatch. But for all the juice Foreman squeezes from the unconscious, the major perception of the evening, perhaps its only perception, is a question of perspective: "When you see something out of the corner of your eye, do you really see it?" The problem, indeed, is in the limited vision.

Des McNuff's Dodger Theater production of Wolfgang Hildesheimer's *Mary Stuart* (New York Public Theater) also is highly accomplished, and strongly performed by Roberta Maxwell as the unfortunate Queen of Scots falling to pieces in her English prison. Her only hope the expectation of sainthood, a half-crazy lady vainly trying to maintain some dignity as she awaits her execution, Mary is the lobotomized witness of the moral extinction of the world, as everybody in the prison, from the warders to her own retinue, pick her carrion bones. She watches her courtiers struggle over her clothes and jewelry, allows her trusted apothecary to feed her drugs, and is even unconscious, after she calls for her favorite hunting dogs, of the fact that they have been presented to her stuffed. Mary is totally preoccupied with acting out a heroic notion of her own death, so as to enter history in grand style. The dramatist, on the other hand, is preoccupied with stripping her death of any heroism whatsoever, while reducing everybody around her to venal, lecherous, self-interested mercenaries. The cynicism is scorching, but ultimately hollow. In *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, Brecht satirized Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* in order to examine the economic determinants of history. Here, Hildesheimer satirizes Schiller's *Maria Stuart* for no apparent purpose other than to provide a dollop of German black humor.

Emily Mann's *Still Life* (American Place Theater) is a serious effort to involve us with a searing contemporary issue—namely, the impact of the Vietnam War on the personal and domestic lives of the Americans involved in it. Out of a series of interviews with a

Vietnam veteran, his wife, and his mistress, Miss Mann has carved a succession of monologues. All three characters sit facing us at a table, pouring out confessions. The evening has the ring of unadorned truth—also, unfortunately, its monotony. Miss Mann seems less concerned with the war than with how it has influenced personal relations, how the imperatives of government poison the lives of men, and how these poisons in turn infect the lives of women. Barely conscious of each other, the two women nevertheless share a morose perception of masculine failure. "You wonder why there's so much lesbianism around these days, look at the men." "I'm worried about men. . . . They're not coming through somehow." "They were programed to fuck, and now we want them to make love." Since the characters are essentially self-involved, their perceptions never seem to rise much above domestic homilies, as if the major significance of the greatest tragedy in America's recent history was its impact on sex and marriage.

Well, that's a little unfair; the play is not entirely dominated by feminist issues. Some slides are shown, for example, demonstrating the havoc wrought on the Vietnamese people, and Mark, the veteran, occasionally tries to face the enormity of the war, and the question of his own complicity. Even this effort, however, is limited by the characters' narrow range of understanding. I respect the seriousness of this production, which is acted with considerable intensity by John Spencer, Mary McDonnell, and Timothy Near, but I left the theater peculiarly untouched. Speaking monologues, the characters rarely engage each other, and that makes it hard for them to engage us. The single emotion one brings away is guilt—less over the war than over one's failure to sympathize with the sufferers.

At the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater in Lincoln Center, Edward Albee is producing a *One Act Play Festival* as a supplement to the major events on the stage of the Vivian Beaumont. Recognizing that modern audiences are essentially indifferent to new works, the non-profit theaters are beginning to

MOVING PICTURE

For Eileen

Nothing aches
like the end of a film.

All the world's promise
the Grand Illusion of life
itself, enlarged by music, photographed
in full cry and certified
by the gestures of giants—
when the house lights come up again
on the popcorn present
it all shrivels to this flat bleariness.

For God's sake
be patient
give me another moment
in the dark, to rearrange
my protective clothing, blink back
unwonted tears, restore
my soul to its natural habitat.

Up there
behind discreet curtains
the blank screen waits
to loose the next epidemic of dreams.
Down here
we sit, still
our feet stuck in drying coke.

Tell me, my beauty
if you can
which of these worlds
brings tears
to your far-fetched eyes.

Roger Shattuck

segregate untried plays in "festivals" produced in smaller second stages, thus hoping to fulfill their obligations to young playwrights without suffering the consequences at the box office. In the best of all possible worlds, deserving new plays would be treated as respectfully as established classics, but in our world a strategem like this at least ensures that they'll be heard.

Edward Albee has always championed new American drama, often contributing his own royalties to the care and feeding of young playwrights. In his current role in the Mitzi E. Newhouse, he has the opportunity to institutionalize this artistic generosity. It would be pleasant to report that such dedication has paid dividends—but the three works in the current festival simply reinforce one's worry about the limited range of contemporary American theater. Jeffrey Sweet's *Stops Along the Way* is a lifeless vignette about a woman winding up an affair with a

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indictment**

that first surveys the historical accord between the Latin Roman Catholic Church and colonial powers, then assesses the new direction of the Church as reformist and denunciatory of dictatorship, U.S. military aid and corporate investments in the Latin countries."

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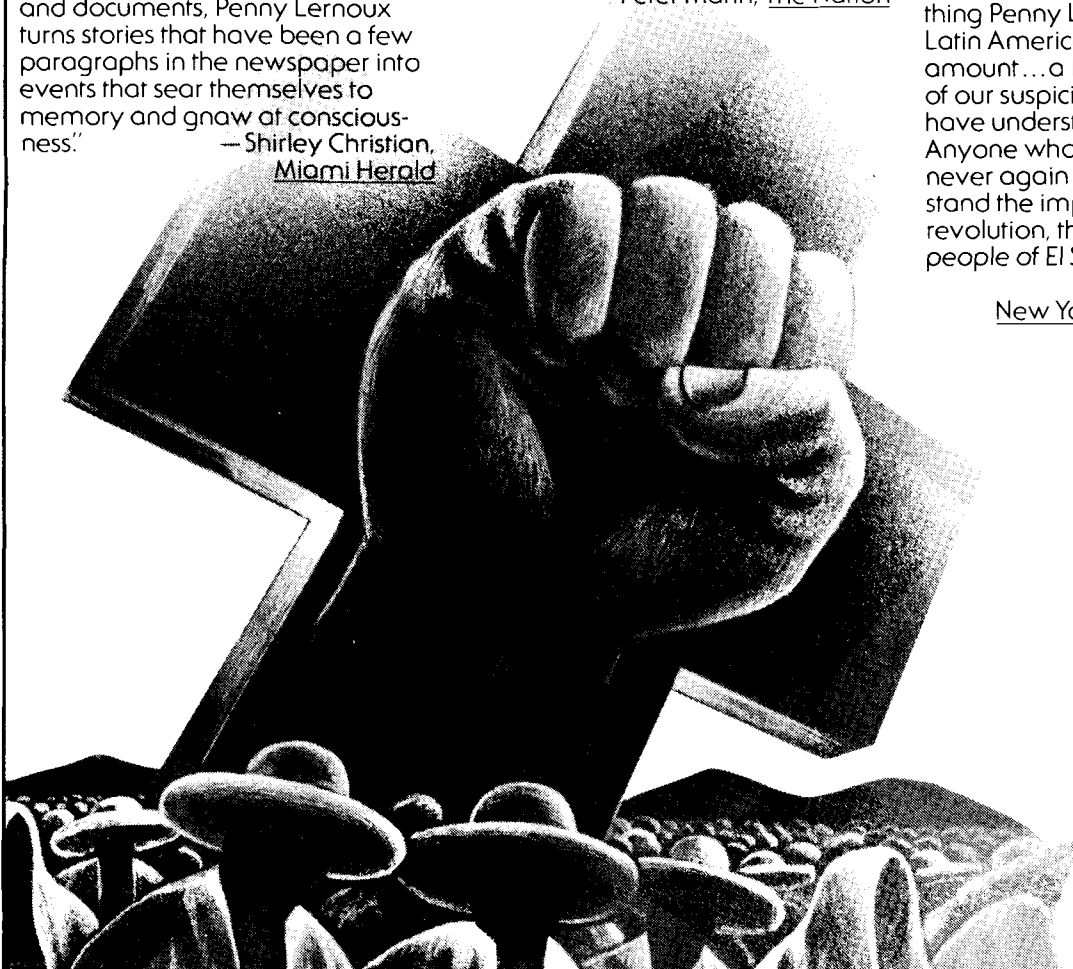
of the Catholic Church's revolt against the military regimes which govern the nations where almost 50 percent of the world's Catholics reside."

—Robert F. Drinan,
Washington Post Book World

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—A.J. Langguth,
New York Times Book Review



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and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America

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younger man. Will Donna return to her husband in Baltimore? Will Larry work up enough feeling to return her love? The playwright seems to be auditioning for a job as staff writer on "As the World Turns."

John Guare, on the other hand, is a writer of genuine sensibility, caught here in an off moment. In *Fireworks Lie Secret Codes* makes him look like the shaggy dog of American drama—a large, generous, good-natured, likable animal that you'd like a lot better if he'd stop splaying his front paws and licking your face. The title alone is enough to put you off your feed, and so is the fact that the characters are numbered rather than named. #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 group on a roof garden, drinking cocktails and watching Bicentennial fireworks in the sky ("Blue! Red! Chrysanthemum!"), meanwhile revealing their innermost secrets, most of which you have no desire to hear. A matron (#2) unburdens herself of her decision to move to New Jersey. An English homosexual (#3), living with the man who owns the apartment (#5), confesses that he is returning to the UK in order to "reclaim my language"—not a bad notion considering that the prose his confreres are forced to speak includes such nuggets as "Hello, world, this is me" and "Our laughter had only helped move anguish into anecdote." #3's decision strikes terror into #5, apparently because "We have put so much into the apartment." Is Guare trying to tell us something about the impact of rent hikes on New Yorkers' souls?

The most serious work of the evening is Percy Granger's *Vivien*, another domestic play about the relationship between a nervous regional theater director and the father he hasn't seen since childhood. Mentally ill and institutionalized, the father at first refuses to recognize or acknowledge his offspring, but after agreeing to accompany his son to a production of *The Sea Gull*, the father slowly begins to communicate. Granger writes terse dialogue, heightened by the father's schizophrenic imagery ("I used to smell of semen," he says, "but that's all over since I contracted syphilis"), and he knows a bit about the unexpected insights of the insane ("I enjoyed it—I didn't like it," he remarks about *The Sea Gull*, "So many people—so miserable—well, that's communism for you"). Furthermore, the halting, budding relationship between the two men has a wistful quality that is touching. Directed by Kevin Conway, the production features two agile per-

formances by Michael Egan and James Woods, partly thanks to a concreteness in the writing without which the performances in the other plays suffer. But if *Vivien* is superior to its companion pieces in style, it shares their limited ambitions—three thin sketches from a theater marking time.

The American theater, in short, is desperately in need of a subject. I can't imagine that it won't discover one soon. The new administration, I suspect, is

about to hand us a priceless gift by awakening our outraged conscience. We may go down, but at least we won't go down slumbering. If I may prophesy, President Reagan's contribution to contemporary art will be his capacity to provide the kind of adversarial stimulus we haven't enjoyed since the departure of Richard Nixon. It was Art Buchwald who called Nixon "the best president I ever had." The theater may soon be able to boast of a better one in Reagan.

The neglect of 'The Fifth Queen.'

Homage to Ford Madox Ford

by William Gass

The style of Ford Madox Ford's Tudor trilogy, *The Fifth Queen*, is stagy, melodramatic, artificial, even quaint; themes are packed into paragraphs like fish in tins; individuals are addressed as though they were crowds; terms are dragged from their graves and put once more in the line of fire like ghosts given rifles; qualifying phrases are repeated like Homeric epithets; scenes are set the slow deliberate way posts are sunk in concrete; there is such a high tone taken you really might believe you were at court . . . but are these merely history's playing cards—these characters? Do they stand precariously in their designs like figures in *Alice*? History, that great fictioneer, surely did not create the honest, stubborn, beautiful, and saintly Katharine Howard, so richly realized she might have had some other life outside imagination, yet so near perfection we could not wish for her a lesser world to drag a dress in. The pouf of an unbeliever could not make its way against the pure gale of her talk, for indeed she is a soul made out of pas-

William Gass, author of *The World Within the Word* (Godine), teaches philosophy at Washington University. William Trevor is author of *Other People's Worlds* (Viking). A fuller version of William Gass's essay, as well as William Trevor's note, will appear in *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, edited and with an introduction by Sondra J. Stang, to be published in May by the University of Pennsylvania Press, by whose permission it appears here.

sionate speech. As for Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal, a man both duplicitous and dedicated, murderous and admirable, and one who well knows he has outlived three queens and a thousand plots—is he simply another slick and painted surface? does the shaded tablelight slide like frightened water from his smoothly insinuated shape? And Nick Throckmorton, whose golden beard is the devil's mane, or Magister Udal, wrapped in his furs like a ferret—are they only as thin as pasteboard, flat, as any knave, although of the suit of diamonds? Then there's Lady Mary, as cold to the king as ice is to itself—is she of no account, to be sloughed off in a losing trick? Perhaps Thomas Culpepper, the Hotspur of this piece, has taken too much of his nature from his name; but consider, instead, His Royal Grace, the fat, beleaguered king, who, because he is the king, must use everyone in the service of the crown, and whom everyone, because he is the king, would use in the smaller service of themselves—does he not weigh upon his horse as heavily as his armor, and heavier on history? is he not even wider than his portraits? does he not clot every entrance like a wound?

Will the value of these characters simply vary with the course of the play, though their stiffly posed and tinted images remain vividly the same? There will be a critical fuss about this. Why, in a world of change, don't these people alter something other than their loyalties? And we might answer by asking

how the stream of time might run but between unyielding banks, or how we might measure its motion except in the eddies it makes about rocks. Or do we prefer illusions, and like to fancy that people grow new characters like their beards and bellies, whereas, in fact, by the time the bosom has budded and the first blood run, even the sweetest maid is beyond shaping?

The Fifth Queen resembles the maze at Hampton Court. Meanings multiply among the corridors its sentences suggest. When a torch flares, they return like luminous echoes from concealed corners, cul-de-sacs, and distant doors. In fact, the work is so intensely visual, so alternately light and dark, you might think the words were being laid on the page like Holbein's paint.

Whilst the maids sewed in silence the Queen sat still upon a stool. Light-skinned, not very stout, with a smooth oval face, she had laid her folded hands on the gold and pearl embroidery of her lap and gazed away into the distance, thinking. She sat so still that not even the lawn tips of her wide hood with its invisible, minute sewings of white, quivered. Her gown was of cloth of gold, but since her being in England she had learned to wear a train, and in its folds on the ground slept a small Italian greyhound. About her neck she had a partlet set with green jewels and with pearls. Her maids sewed; the spinning wheels ate away the braided flax from the spindles, and the sunlight poured down through the high windows. She was a very fair woman then, and many that had seen her there sit had marvelled of the King's disfavour for her; but she was accounted wondrous still, sitting thus by the hour with the little hounds in the folds of her dress. Only her eyes with their half-closed lids gave to her lost gaze the appearance of a humour and irony that she never was heard to voice.

The style of this novel cannot be escaped, and readers who prefer their literature to be invisibly literary should shun it. There are no merely workmanlike words here, anxious to get the job done so they can suds themselves up at some pub on the way back to the dictionary. Even the common people—Badge, the printer, or Margot Pains—aren't ordinary, nor is their language, nor any of the spaces they inhabit: cottages, inns, attics, ingles.

The Fifth Queen constructs the secret theater of history. There are labyrinthine hallways here, bewildering forests of passages and pillars through which the darkness whispers as though through parted teeth. There are secret

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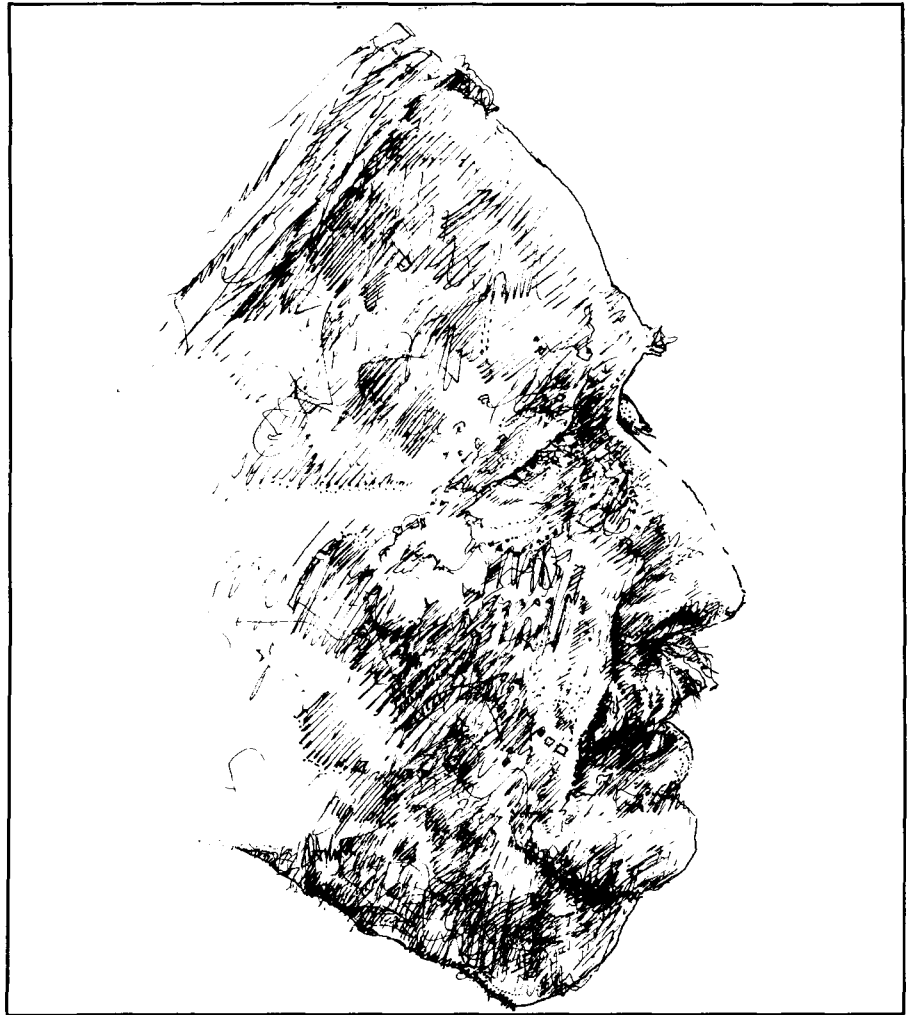
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and spiral stairs, low dupes, cats' paws, double agents, devious aims, false alarms, unreported catastrophes. Characters are caught in their own schemes like ants in honey. They move no more, then, than the patient queen. Wide Venetian velvet surcoats, ceremonially embroidered, jeweled, furred, do more than hide a corpulence like Henry's. There are cold wet walls, weeds pushing up through pavements like unmentionable desires, chills which can't be overcome. Chimneys smoke. Innuendoes slip past like drafts impossible to trace. Yet there is much lip service, courtly talk, and rumors as impossible to slap as gnats. A barge carries Cromwell quietly down the Thames, but there is noise and turmoil in the street. And lies . . . lies both petty and prodigious; those which are bald-faced, arrogant, and inept, and those subtle, careful, clever lies which lie so near the truth they might be lovers taking warmth from one another's intermingling limbs. In a world where trust is as provisional as loyalty, and loyalty as provisional as its profit, there are more than many spies. Faith stiffens character while it warps the mind, and treason (justified by citations from the Good Book, and by arguments pilfered from the philosophers, and by examples extracted from divines) enters and exits in every contentious breath. Speech is dangerous—speech of any kind. Your most innocuous opinions may be used to indict you, and the written word is like an incriminating print. There are purloined letters, falsified documents, peep holes, sleeping potions, bribes. There is blackmail, whoring, theft, torture, threats, and countless other machinations. And there are also bearded, moist-mouthed villains straight from the great age of Webster, Tourneur, John Ford, and Machiavelli.

The Fifth Queen, then, is like Eisenstein's *Ivan*: slow, intense, pictorial, and operatic. Plot is both its subject and its method. Execution is its upshot and its art. Even though it includes clowns who berate one another, they make no successful jokes, and *The Fifth Queen* remains relentlessly tragic. It must be read with the whole mouth—lips, tongue, teeth—like a long slow bite of wine. For prose, it is the recovery of poetry itself.

This last effect is clearly Ford's intent. He has not been brought up in a gray thread, black bread, Protestant world. The studied emblems, the romantic longings, the medievalisms of the Rossettis, Hunts, and Ford Madox Browns—



Ford Madox Ford by David Schorr

their sentimentalisms, their garish overcoloring, too—were part of his inheritance. He had no desire to write like Defoe just because he was writing prose. The novelist did not have to assume a severe, undecorated, screwed-down style, as if weakness were a show of strength, as if only the simple were sincere, or the plain ennobling; it was not necessary to adopt a false modesty for your talent as if it were a mark of virtue to write as though you hadn't any. Besides, he fancied himself an English gent. He wrote in *The March of Literature*:

To put it roughly, we might say that the great periods and cadences of the seventeenth century had, by the eighteenth, deteriorated into a sort of mechanical rhythm and that by the nineteenth century, in the avoidance of the sort of pomposity and the dry rhythm of the eighteenth century, the language became so timid and indefinite that it was impossible to use it for making any definite statement.

The struggle which *The Fifth Queen* represents—between the Old Faith and the New Learning—occurs at the stage

of style and literary theory, as well as within the local practice of the genre, and not merely the level of political, religious ideology or historical event. And the loss to later English life which Katharine Howard's fall signifies to Ford is regained by the writing itself. Rather than butt helplessly against the conventions of that coal-stove Realism which stands for the triumph of the Puritan business spirit, *The Fifth Queen* seeks a language which springs from the traditions of the land and can be cultivated like another crop; so that Ford's return to the historical romance, despite its dubious popularity and retinue of pleasing scribblers, is intended to recover and release the word.

To call a novel historical is nearly always to accuse it of something. Even among unreal objects, where fictions are said to belong, the "historical" has a special place; for if any history, by the necessity of its nature, is already full of unreliable representations, then its further reflection in fiction has to be wavering and dim indeed. The curious conjunction which makes up the name (historical facts in their casual connec-

tions as against the manifold misdirections of invention and dream) indicates that its very creation is suspect, as if a shadow were to be wrapped in further shadows until the smoking semblance of some enemy's cigar were ominously shaped, or a daggered figure in a cloak suggested . . . the looming bulk of a battlement, perhaps . . . a fluttering drape.

In historical fiction a superficial sense of antique reality can be easily achieved, but what is obtained is frequently felt to be facile and cheap, like the glib alterations—the blatant vulgarity—of masquerades. It is an amusement—an escape—and melodrama is its main-spring. Thus its tick is loud just because the time it pretends to tock for is far away. Unlike history, what the fiction recounts is rarely sordid or simply stupid, nor is it often tragic, because its heroes and heroines pass through the most terrible events unscathed, like driftwood down a rapids.

Where the historian looks for laws and regularities, patterns and steps, the novelist admires what merely decorates the dance. He prefers the exotic, colorful, and unique. He measures quirks and curiosities like a tailor, but cuts no cloth to the true weight and temporal figure of things. He shuns the normal, the plain. It has no zap. He dotes on gossip, slander, hearsay, anecdote, lies. He wants to recreate the past, not understand it as a historian should. The contents of constitutions and the import of decrees are tedious to get through; congresses are too boring to attend; committee reports too dry to report upon. Figures fill his heart with horror. He turns his back on bills of lading, tables of organization, and balances of trade. He wants amusing conversation—clever, witty, perceptive—and conversation is as out of place in history as a count of our morning cups of coffee.

So the novelist floats happily about on the edges and in the eddies of events and rarely moves in the mainstream. He habitually goes beyond the evidence, oversteps the bounds of probability, and invents occasions, speeches, feelings, thoughts, and scenes, which no doubt never were nor could have been, simply to enliven his narrative and entertain, rather than instruct, his readers. If it would further the drama to have minister and field marshal meet—no matter that their lives at no time touched—he need only scribble a few more paragraphs and the impossible deed is done.

The novelist's point of view tends to become passionate and heedless at the exact point the careful historian should become cold and cautious. Human decisions always seem supreme to him, and he does not suffer his characters to be vast natural forces like climate and disease, or even complex, indifferent social orders, or ponderous and mysteriously moving bureaucracies. He is customarily precise and fussy about trifles, but vague about the central and most effective matters, liking battles basically because there is much movement, excitement, noise, and blood, since it is the courage and fate of the hero that counts, not the cost or consequences of victory.

When Romance mates with History to fertilize fairy tales with the seed of the real world, they beget Myth. We are given young Abe Lincoln on the one hand, reading by log-light, and Robert Hood on the other, splitting infinity with an arrow as neatly as Abe's rails. The form of the swashbuckler, the border tale, the costume romance seems essentially unserious, and in our day it has become just another popular genre, not more significant than the thriller or the sitcom, the Western or the soap. Ford Madox Ford contributed to the neglect of his great Tudor trilogy by

remarking, in his book on Conrad, that "an historical novel even at its best is nothing more than a *tour de force*, a fake more or less genuine in inspiration and workmanship, but none the less a fake." If all of these heavily prejudicial and, indeed, greatly misleading words ("none the less," "even at best," "nothing more," "*tour de force*," "fake") suit Ford's real feelings, then his ghost cannot complain when even critics rather well disposed to him paste the word "pastiche" across *The Fifth Queen* like a warning.

Ford led an unwise life, as Walter Allen has observed. An unwise life, indeed. For one thing, he wrote simply too much sheer "stuff," and his best books got submerged in the accumulated glib. He badly mismanaged his divorce, and in the incredible confusion forfeited the sympathy of writers like Galsworthy and Wells, whom he should never have allowed to enjoy a moment of superiority at his expense, while also losing the friendship of stiff-necks like Henry James, who recoiled from impropriety as though it were snot on a custard. Ford's "Germanness" had always troubled him (he wanted to be French—what decent writer does not?), but his change of name didn't help him, and

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Ford's England

Thirty-two years have passed but I still take pride in the fact that I discovered Ford Madox Ford for myself. I bought the Tietjens novels and *The Good Soldier* when they came out as Penguins in 1948: one and sixpence each, and I notice from the dates I jotted down on the flyleaves that I couldn't afford to run to all five in the same month. Many years later I heard myself saying in a London pub that *The Good Soldier* must surely be one of the best novels written in this century. To prove my point I lent my copy and never got it back. But the Tietjens story is still alive on my bookshelves, tattered now and exuding that distinctive papery smell that cheap editions acquire with time.

I reread *The Good Soldier* in order to write this. It still seems to me to be a masterpiece. I did not reread the Tietjens quartet, because I have carried its world about with me for so long that I prefer it to exist as it does in my imagination, without interference. My memory of Tietjens himself, of Sylvia, Valentine Wannop, Mrs. Duchemin, Macmaster, and all the others, may be faulty; I may have come to exaggerate certain of their characteristics, incidents may have been lost in the fog of the intervening years, the order of events dislocated. But I remember the novels and their people as one remembers life, and I think that is as it should be. Tietjens is still the Tory gentleman, dressed carelessly yet with a note of style, resembling a sack of potatoes when he sits down in an armchair. Whether she said it or not, I recall Sylvia most vividly as the source of the remark that the really divvy moment of an illicit love affair is when you watch the man you're spending the weekend with buying the tickets at the railway station. Some do not in the Tietjens world; some endlessly do. Some marry in order to have conversations over breakfast, some don't converse at all.

My debt to Ford Madox Ford is that of any reader to the writer of good books, but for me there is just a little more to it, for those books introduced me to an England I did not even know existed. I was 19 when I first read them, a student at Trinity College, Dublin, who had never been outside Ireland and could only guess what England, so long a trouble to us, was like. As a child in such provincial towns as Skibbereen and Tipperary and Enniscorthy, I had formed an impression of a very splendid place indeed: leafy and beautiful, with no burnt-out houses or smashed castles, no brambles growing through rusty baronial gates, as we had in Ireland. "England," I have written elsewhere, "spelt elegance, and style and graciousness." I read my way through a mass of English public-school stories, through *Bulldog Drummond* and all of Edgar Wallace, Dickens, Jane Austen, the Brontës, A. J. Cronin, Francis Brett Young, Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, and almost everyone else. But it wasn't until I came across Ford that England and the English took real shape, and having come to know both rather well in the meanwhile I am repeatedly aware of how accurate, and how perceptive, he was in painting his picture. And not only in depicting life in the country he so valued and loved did Ford display these qualities: they are even more to the fore in his continuous investigation of the ever-interesting kaleidoscope of the human predicament everywhere.

Ford shatters the surface of things and even out of the fragments creates an extra pattern of truth. The honor and decency of which he wrote so movingly—and the England which had cosseted them for so long—no longer exist. But his voice remains, echoing always more powerfully as the bleaker years pile up.

William Trevor

later when he was unfortunately gassed during the war, so that afterward he always heaved and huffed, his original name (Hueffer) returned to his lungs to taunt him. His habit of altering the facts to make the truth more truthful than it had been on the "real" rather than the "related" occasion didn't help either, nor did his tendency, quite kind in itself, to condescend (according to Pound, even to God).

Ford's collaboration with Conrad, of which he was proud, nevertheless hurt his reputation, because Conrad was older, he had the flattering good sense to choose to write in English rather than in Polish or French, and was clearly an exotic genius; consequently Ford's account of their relationship seemed to many just so many self-serving lies, dependent as it was on the assumption that the two writers were equals, and that, when it came to the English language, Ford naturally knew a good deal more.

Ford was a sort of Don Juan with ideas too, and it was difficult for him to

sustain his interest in a project once it was obvious he had conquered it; thus he was inclined to finish up quickly in order to run after another—possibly prettier—notion. He often needed a gimmick to get him going (the train wreck which propels his hero into the 14th century, for example, in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*), but these mechanicalities invariably betrayed him, and their thin elaborations defied even splendid writing.

Ford was a success with women, always a bad sign, since they are certain to see that you fail somewhere else to prove your dedication. It is furthermore unsettling to other men if you look, as Wyndham Lewis wrote, like a "flabby lemon and pink giant who hung his mouth open as though he were an animal at the Zoo inviting buns." Ford was a success as an editor, too, so people knew where his skills really lay, and could put him in his editorial place. There he earned the gratitude of many excellent authors of every school, style, and age, who promptly repaid him with

malicious slanders, vulgar innuendo, and other Hemingways. Gradually Ford became known as one of those who circle the great as buzzards do, a loquacious "hang about," padding his reputation by dropping names, telling tales, and remaining bravely aboard foundering magazines until they disappeared beneath their debts. Oh yes. He wrote. Easily. Much. Fairy tales, biographies, travel, commentaries, criticism, memoirs and other states of mind, novels, poems. How could one eye keep such a dizzy flock of authors in view? Well, he had his small popular successes, his critical acclaim, but he was always broke. He retired to the country. He played, for a while, the gentleman farmer, embraced simplicity like another mistress, put on airs. He went on and on about Provence. Some claimed he was a conniver, a bounder. He got by on small change. He bragged by disparaging himself. He hated scenes and then arranged his life like a procession of them. He needed connections, though his family was widely known, and he had been

raised to be the genius he was. He had also sat on Turgenev's knee, he said, or was it Tennyson's? Liszt's. Of Swinburne he had once caught a glimpse. He had an early romantic attachment to the Middle Ages. He liked Christina Rossetti. His form grew shapeless, his face puffy; he was always fairer than was a good idea. He had a wheeze. He formed strange ménages. He became minor.

Ford's greatest crime, however, was his migration to America. Not only did he come to the United States, he allowed us to discover him. Malcolm Lowry is another victim of our praise. *The Good Soldier* had to be stuffed down English crawls like a pill poked down a cat's throat. Only Graham Greene (a man of amiable perceptions, and a Catholic capable of understanding Ford's obsessions) befriended his work. Certainly the writers whom Ford so faithfully celebrated did not bang many pans on his behalf.

Still, when Ford said that his historical novels were fakes, or when, in a badly bungled and widely misunderstood dedicatory foreword to *The Good Soldier*, he said that until that book he had not really extended himself and described his previous works as being "in the nature of pastiches, of pieces of rather precious writing, or of *tours de force*," then the critics believed him as they had never believed him before; believed as war departments believe in their weapons of war; and that word—*pastiche*—was cut on a stamp like EXPEDITE or AIRMAIL, and brought down on Ford again and again with a kind of coward's eagerness, and a now legendary stupidity.

Ford's modernist aesthetic is derived from Flaubert, and it is based upon a formalism which is rarely popular with critics, while it fails even to come to the notice of the ordinary reader. It is a position, if taken, which requires some unpleasant reassessments of the Anglo-Irish-American literary tradition, and none of these alterations is likely to be tolerable to a history shaped largely by chauvinism and defended to schoolboys by bachelors and marms.

It is to be remembered that a passage of good prose is a work of art absolute in itself and with no more dependence on its contents than is a fugue of Bach, a minuet of Mozart, or the writings for the piano of Debussy [*The March of Literature*].

The exceptional range of Ford's own writing allowed him to see the obvious (that fiction is written in prose) with a

scarcely commonplace consciousness of the consequences: one being that the novelist must first of all be a master of the medium, and not merely a toothsome doughnut soaked in life.

The failure of the famous ruminative styles of Donne and Milton, Browne and Taylor to set the standard, and the consequent disappearance of rhetoric's art and rhythmic richness from English prose, beginning roughly and symbolically with the death of Swift in 1745 (as Ford marks it), is perfectly coincident with the progressive adoption of anti-Ciceronian models on the one hand, and the mounting influence of science, its societies, and its stylistic aims on the other. But the loss of that solemn periodic movement, the gay interior mime, which is the end and final music of the mind, is simultaneous, too, with the vast heady successes of colonialism, the increasingly thick and calloused grip of Protestant ideals on the heart like a misplaced cold in the head, and the infectious spread of a crude monetary utilitarianism which would allow Art to flourish only if it were called Moral Education, and education to continue only so long as it could be shown to be suitable to the starchy new rulers of an empire.

Thus the decline of the ornate style commences at the conclusion of the late Renaissance. As the world's geography

enlarges and men see strange new lands on which to fatten, its pretensions shrink. The spread of learning overlaps it, and the old grand manner is everywhere beset. Perhaps it is merely a "manner"—of scrapes and cuffs and laces—unmanly and impotent. So the self-assurance of this style weakens at a time when nation states are being set up like megaliths, crowds count, and crude is king. Commerce, manufacture—the sheer multiplicity of *things*—overwhelms its own opposing wealth of *words*. It is sickened slowly, done in by distribution, by vulgar masses and their love of sensation, by mindless duplication. The magazine serial becomes the madame. Lending libraries boss the block, and books are built like row houses, chapter connected to chapter, volume following volume, with a dreary sameness. The paragraph is replaced by the sentence; the sentence is shortened like a dress; the dress is moreover designed to be as plain as a Mennonite's nightgown; and that majestic, endlessly elaborating language, subtle and continuously discriminating, that joyful, private, yet publicly appointed prose, that mouthmade music, headlong, resonant, and roaring once, is reduced to a mousy squeak by the rising noise of the novel. That, at least, is Fordie's myth, and it is a myth he will live to write by.

Ford knew, and knew he knew, and

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what's more (unfortunately combining the correctness of his conceit with an unmannerly candor), *said* he knew more about the strategies of the traditional novel than anyone writing in English. *The Fifth Queen* is a textbook of technique, a catalogue of resources, an art of the English fugue. The struggle it depicts is both historical and literary. But Ford is not an innovator in the same sense that Joyce is, or Gertrude Stein, or Faulkner, or even Virginia Woolf. He is essentially a 19th-century novelist—the last of his line—with 20th-century theories and a 16th-century taste on his tongue. His themes concern the conflict between periods, the dependence of principles (alas!) on times, our changing attitudes toward vice and virtue. Katharine Howard's sweet waist is grasped by the *Geist*. There is no future forward, yet there is no going back. Where rib confronts rib, Ford has none of the hope the lung has for its next breath. He has Hardy heavy on his one hand, Joyce will soon weigh down the other, Lawrence is standing on his chest. Ford will soon hail with regret that "finely sculptured surface of sheer words," as Wyndham Lewis wrote, which will protect the novel's center from the world, and constitute the main concern of much of the work to come.

So if, as Conrad declared, *The Fifth Queen* is the swan song of the historical romance, then *The Good Soldier* brings the Jamesian tradition to a close, just as *Parade's End* concludes the lifetime of its kind. There are other modes of English fiction for which Ford did not perform the last rites—the picaresque, for instance, the Wodehouse, the Waugh; but what serious artist would want to imitate, now, the beautiful bloat of late James? desire to create that particular world of hesitation and concern again, or become obsessed once more with the unsaid, the distantly implied, the cleverly concealed design, as if the carpet weren't there to receive a tread or please the eye, but to entrap the mind? who would willingly attempt still another time those elegant weekend garden parties which were always so richly walked, sedately tea'd, astir with clever conversation and subtle avowals, so abloom with intricate plans and genteel betrayals, that everyone was soon in vexation, doubt, and moral uncertainty as though lost behind a high meandering hedge? who would wish to impale themselves on that impossible appointment? especially since Ford Madox Ford inherited the whole wealth of fictional capacities which Henry James spent a

career amassing for the once impoverished novel of marriage and manners he had initially taken up and brilliantly brought out, the way those avuncular European villains of his take up some well-to-do, young, innocent American to sadden her into scintillation; consequently, *The Good Soldier*, with such funds at hand, could realize the genre's accumulated powers beyond any penny of further purchase.

The Tudor trilogy is a muscle show, all right, a strut, a flex of force, but it is not a simple deceptive flourish like General Beauregard's marching the same small squad round and round his camp to simulate the nick-of-time arrival of a rescuing army. Its surface is more accessible than that of *Pale Fire*; it plays no games with its readers and is never facetious like *Lolita*. There is no parody like that which sends the humorless reader away from *At Swim-two-birds*. It is not as exotic and apparently "worked up" out of history as *Salammbô*, nor is it as narrowly focused as *The Awkward Age*, although equally and severely scenic. It is tragic, but not fanatically gloomy as the writing of Samuel Beckett. Unlike John Barth's *Letters*, it wears its learning lightly, and even lets its Latin sound like Oscar Wilde. The linguistic difficulties are minor, and its

length does not exceed that of *Ulysses* or many of Thomas Mann's novels, or George Eliot's *Romola*, for that matter. It is a virtuoso performance—the first of Ford's great shows—and closes out the historical novel like an emptied account. Later he will try for a similar triumph over the realistic novel by inventing Christopher Tietjens, a truly good "good soldier." In an arrogant display of literary genius, Ford Madox Ford brought the 19th-century novel, in each of its principal areas of excellence, to its final and most complete expression. For this he has not been forgiven.

The neglect of this novel, the critical obtuseness the Tudor trilogy has had to endure, the indifference of readers to an accomplished art, and a major talent, the failure of scholarship even to disclose the real clay feet of the real Ford, even the esteem in which *The Good Soldier* is held, as if that book were being used to hide the others, but, above all, the unwillingness of writers to respond to a master, constitute a continuing scandal which hushing up will only prolong; yet one does wonder what is to be done. Certainly no adequate history of the recent English novel can be composed that does not recognize the door through which that novel passed to become modern.

Defiling the Deity

Treason Against God:

A History of the Offense of Blasphemy

by Leonard W. Levy

(Schocken Books; \$24.95)

Professor Levy's is an ambitious subject. He discusses the history of blasphemy from ancient Israel to the present day in England and the USA. His argument is that "although blasphemy was a Jewish concept in its origin, its Jewish history is slight." From the time of Moses, blasphemy "was scarcely ever committed, or if committed not prosecuted, or if prosecuted not recorded." In a fascinating and no doubt contentious account of the trial of Jesus, Professor Levy argues that Jesus was not and could not have been tried before a Jewish court on a charge of blasphemy. The account in the Gospels, he contends, is

in this respect false, reflecting not what actually happened but later Christian beliefs that the Jews, not the Romans, were responsible for the death of Jesus. "The safety of the early churches depended on their identification with a pacifistic Savior who never opposed Rome and who had been crucified at Jewish instigation."

With the establishment of Christianity, blasphemy was no longer limited to reviling God but came to encompass claims of divine attributes or honors, verbal abuse or denial of Christianity, and ultimately—with the development of alternative interpretations of Chris-

tianity—the expression of a difference of opinion about the fundamentals of the faith. In the Middle Ages blasphemy and heresy became intertwined—Professor Levy quotes Thomas Aquinas: “heretics blaspheme against God by following a false faith.” They were punished accordingly.

If Roman Catholics tended to subsume blasphemy under heresy, Protestants equally failed to distinguish between the two. Luther “tended to choke on the word ‘heretic’” because “the Protestant reformers . . . were being killed by the Catholic church as heretics.” Luther wrote and preached for years about the futility and evil of punishing heresy. Instead he used the word “blasphemy” “to describe anything that he disliked or disagreed with, just as the church had used ‘heresy.’” The number of ideas and persons with whom or which Luther disagreed increased with time. In Protestant countries, where the church was closely dependent on the state, heretics tended to be condemned as blasphemers. In Catholic countries the church condemned for heresy, handing its victims over to the secular arm for execution of sentence, and the state increasingly condemned for blasphemy.

To range over so many centuries is courageous and stimulating, but it carries its own dangers. There are times when Professor Levy seems just to have tipped his card index into a book. There are other occasions when—in- evitably, no doubt—he writes about subjects on which he is insufficiently informed. He discusses Giordano Bruno with no reference to the seminal work of Frances Yates. Powerful though Archbishop Laud was in England in the 1630s, he did not get a bishop appointed lord high admiral, as Professor Levy says he did. The Diggers are wrongly dismissed as religious mystics; the Ranters as “frenzied,” “crazy.” Professor Levy mistakes the Scottish theologian Samuel Rutherford for an Englishman, and so finds it necessary to explain away his Scottish sympathies. He invents a bishop called William Burnet.

We get to the core of the book with the effective loss of the church’s power to persecute in 17th-century England. The last burnings for heresy occurred in 1612. The victims were anti-Trinitarians. Their heresy thus comprised constructive blasphemy by denial of the divinity of one or two persons in the Trinity. In 1639 the archbishop of York wished to revive the good old custom of

burning in order to dispose of a Kentish stonemason who had denied the divinity of Christ. In the following decade, the decade of the English Revolution, bishops were abolished and so were church courts, including the executive arm of the church, the Court of High Commission. Heretical sects flourished unchecked for some years, and men and women were able to blaspheme to their hearts’ content. “Criminal proceedings for ‘heresy’ really died as a result of the reforms of the Long Parliament of 1641.”

Many forms of heresy had—or were thought to have—social and political implications. In particular the doctrine that something of the divine exists in human beings, so that they may attain on earth to the sinlessness of Adam before the Fall, of Jesus Christ, seemed particularly dangerous to the respectable classes in times of social turmoil. The fallen state of the mass of humanity was a dogma thought essential to social stability. Private property, human inequality, and the state which protected both were defended by reference

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to the ineradicable sinfulness of the mass of men. Democracy was by definition absurd, since it would mean handing power over to the wicked majority (the equation of the ruling minority with the elect was of course assumed in this argument, though rarely explicitly stated). Change therefore of any kind was always potentially dangerous.

The wisdom of this position was demonstrated during the English Revolution. Some sectaries argued that all men might be saved: Levellers claimed that all men should have the vote. Diggers proclaimed that Christ was rising in *all* men and women, and that this would usher in an egalitarian communist society. Ranters declared that sin had been an invention of the ruling class to keep the lower orders in subjection; but now it had been abolished, and with it the 10 Commandments. Those who believed that theft and adultery were no sins could commit them freely. John Milton did not go as far as the Ranters, but he too believed that the decalogue ("not a faultless code") had been abolished, and that now "the practice of the saints interprets the commandments"—a far-reaching sentiment.

Such beliefs naturally called down

the wrath of the respectable. Levellers, Diggers, and Ranters were suppressed in the early 1650s. But the policy of religious toleration supported by Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army remained. The gentry and merchants whom Parliament represented longed to get rid of it. Since there were no longer any church courts, MPs felt it their duty to intervene to reassert the social decencies.

Their chance came in 1656, when James Nayler, a leader of the Quakers, rode into Bristol on a donkey with ladies strewing palms in his path and crying "Hosannah!" The early Quakers were given to such demonstrations: "going naked for a sign" was a frequent way of trying to make men and women "see that you're naked from the truth." Nayler intended his entry into Bristol to recall Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and so to proclaim that God could dwell in human beings. He was not claiming—as his enemies argued, and as some of his supporters may have thought—divine status for himself. "I am the Son of God, but I have many brethren," he said. George Fox, the Quaker leader who repudiated Nayler, also claimed to be the son of God. "All men are Sons of God," Milton was to say later. But the

anti-tolerationist MPs had got the bit between their teeth and were determined to destroy Nayler, and so to discredit the Quakers and the cause of religious toleration.

The Quakers at that date had not adopted the absolute pacifism and abstention from politics which they proclaimed after 1660. In the mid-1650s Quakers were expelled from the army because of their views: they did not resign from it. Many Quakers retained Leveller and Digger views, such as an obstinate refusal to pay the tithes without which no established church could exist. They broke up services of the state church, heckling and denouncing its ministers as "hirelings" (Milton's word for them too), speaking disrespectfully of the Bible. They refused to remove their hats in the presence of social superiors or magistrates, and insisted on addressing them with the familiar "thou," not the deferential "you." Above all, their numbers had grown with startling rapidity. Originating in the north of England in the early 1650s, by 1656 Quakerism had become a mass movement all over England. There is no reason to suppose that their leaders had political aspirations, but they used inflammatory language about "the Lamb's war," to be fought with "the flaming sword" of the spirit. It is not surprising that unsophisticated members of the propertied class, who had only just recovered from their panic fear of Levellers, Diggers, and Ranters, felt that the sect must be suppressed, and with it the religious toleration which permitted such views to be propagated.

Hence Nayler's trial, "the greatest blasphemy trial of the century." He was accused of committing "horrid blasphemy." His case was discussed in Parliament for several weeks. It raised a number of complicated issues. Had Parliament any right to try him? Were there any acts still valid under which he had committed an offense? What penalty could Parliament impose? The debates, of which we have a full report, are remarkable for the hysterical fear shown by the anti-tolerationists, their determination to get Nayler condemned to death if possible. They made it clear that through him they were attacking the whole policy of religious toleration because of the danger of social subversion, as they saw it, which it posed. In the end Nayler was not sentenced to death but to be pilloried and flogged twice, to have his tongue bored with a

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hot iron and the letter B (for blasphemer) branded on his forehead. He was to be imprisoned indefinitely. It was not very different from a death sentence. Nayler died, a broken man, three years later; and the Quakers learned the lesson.

The panic fears revealed in the Nayler debates undoubtedly contributed to the restoration in 1660 not only of King Charles II but also of bishops and church courts which would reassert the existence of "sin" and punish it appropriately. Yet curiously enough, the Nayler case marked a turning point. Because the High Commission Court was not restored in 1660, the church never recovered its independent persecuting power. It could harry nonconformists, but increasingly control of religious orthodoxy passed to Parliament and the common-law courts. "Theological reasons for persecution," Professor Levy comments, "are blind to reason; secular reasons for persecution disintegrate when experience proves them to be unfounded." Secular penalties for blasphemy fell far short of death and mutilation. But since the common-law courts tried and punished blasphemy it came to be accepted that Christianity was part of the law of the land; "contumelious reproaches" against God or the established religion constituted a common-law offense.

The Blasphemy Act of 1698 stipulated penalties for any person who had professed the Christian religion (thus excepting Jews) who should deny "any one of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be God" or deny "the Christian religion to be true or deny the divine authority of the Bible." John Locke and Isaac Newton would have been guilty under this act if they had spoken out. In the course of the 19th century it was ruled that "if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without the writer being guilty of blasphemy." Thus tone came to be what mattered. In the USA blasphemy prosecutions seem to have died a natural death during the present century. In England there were none between 1921 and 1977. But then the editor of *Gay News* was heavily fined for publishing a poem suggesting that Christ was a homosexual. The court (and the appeal court) ruled that blasphemy consisted of indecent, insulting, offensive, vilifying, or immoderate attacks on Christianity, Christ, or religion. Professor Levy comments:

whether the conviction and judicial ruling in the *Gay Times* case was enlightened or benighted depends on whether one believes that the downfall of society, the subversion of government, or the dissolution of Christianity is at stake because of a disgusting or shocking literary gaucherie. . . . The use of the criminal law to assuage affronted religious feelings imperils liberty—not greatly, to be sure, because blasphemy prosecutions have become legal relics in the Anglo-American world. But they are reminders that the feculent odor of persecution for the

cause of conscience, which is the basic principle on which they rest, has not yet evaporated.

This full, thorough, and provocative book should help to dispel it.

Christopher Hill

Christopher Hill's most recent books are *Milton and the English Revolution* (Viking) and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution* (University of Wisconsin Press).

A Freudian Journey

The White Hotel

by D. M. Thomas

(Viking; \$12.95)

"The psyche of an hysteric is like a child who has a secret, which no one must know, but everyone must guess. And so he makes it easier by scattering clues."

In this beautifully imagined novel by British poet D. M. Thomas, Sigmund Freud is a character and utters the above words during the course of an analysis. The year is 1919, his patient a 29-year-old woman whom he calls, in customary fashion, by a false name in her case history. Thus the cellist "Frau Anna G." is actually one Elisabeth Erdman, an opera singer who has come to 19 Berggasse because she has been suffering from a variety of debilitating ailments believed by the doctor referring her to Freud to be psychogenic.

At this time the real Freud had published such works as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Totem and Taboo*. He had broken with Jung. His standing in the Viennese community, as well as in the international medical community, was assured, his years of "isolation" behind him. Freud's private practice, which had grown smaller during wartime, was again busy. The Freud Thomas gives us, viewed through the lens of fiction, does not seem to be different from the Freud of contemporary witnesses: he is kind, diplomatic, tolerant, insightful, self-assured.

Frau Anna, or Lisa, as she is known outside the pages of Freud's notes, is, on the other hand, a paradigm. Though the etiology of her case is Thomas's,

there are components that derive from Freud's own work. For example, Lisa walks bent forward from the middle, as did one of Freud's classic studies, Fraulein Elisabeth von R. Her breast and ovarian neuralgia, her anorectic appearance and respiratory difficulties, her recurring hallucinations—all of Lisa's symptoms are taken from the literature of hysteria.

When she comes to consult Freud, Lisa professes to feel certain that he will diagnose her disturbances as organic. Freud, of course, intuitively otherwise. His treatment of Lisa goes on for some months as he extracts her memories, dreams, and fantasies, all the while probing determinedly, like a psychic dentist, for the infected spot. In the later stages, however, she becomes resistant and Freud, exasperated, contemplates terminating her analysis.

Suddenly, to Freud's amazement, Lisa returns from a holiday at an Alpine spa, having gained weight and confidence. "Here in short," he comments, "was not the painfully thin, depressed invalid I expected, but an attractive, slightly coquettish young lady, bouncing with health and vigour." To a colleague he describes this startling transformation as "A genuine pseudocyesis!" for Lisa has delivered herself of a manuscript, a surreal portrait that is a sublimely erotic fantasy of her visit to Gastein, and Freud rightly believes that the key to her neurosis will be found in it.

The White Hotel is a novel in seven parts, including a prologue. Five of

them are directly concerned with Lisa's psychoanalysis; two are not and take place a number of years later. Yet the interior landscape of Lisa's mind is the essence of the book; as Thomas's poetic transformations show us, it is both a personal and a collective phenomenon. The clues that Freud unravels, finding his way through the maze to Lisa's secret, lead him to both specific and general conclusions, the latter reinforcing his desire to complete a work he has been in doubt over, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Specifically, the "white hotel" is the stopping-off place for Lisa's imaginary journey. There, as in any dream world, the most disparate events are equalized. Disasters occur—a flood, a fire—but the survivors absorb the horrors and carry on as before. Repression does not exist in the environs of the white hotel, and Lisa's concupiscence, once freed from restraints, gains such momentum that her breasts, "so endlessly had they been sucked on," give out enough milk to fill wine glasses for others to drink.

Lisa's vision of the white hotel is seen by Freud and the reader in two versions. One recounts the fantasy in an

almost rollicking near-rhyme, its sensuous lilt like water slapping on a dock. The second appears after Freud requests that she analyze her own material "in a restrained and sober manner." What he then receives is "an inundation of the irrational and libidinous," a magnificent primer of psychiatric symbolism, "thrown off with all the belle indifférence of a hysteric." From this, and his subsequent questioning of Lisa, Freud realizes that, though there is a "'good' side of the white hotel, its abundant hospitality. . . the shadow of destructiveness cannot be ignored for a single moment, least of all in the times of greatest pleasure." He also sees

the tragic paradox controlling Frau Anna's destiny. She possessed a craving to satisfy the demand of her libido; yet at the same time an imperious demand, on the part of some force I did not comprehend, to poison the well of her pleasure at its source. She had, by her own admission, an unusually strong maternal instinct; yet an absolute edict, imposed by some autocrat I could not name, against having children. She loved food; yet she would not eat.

Moreover, in his quest for synthesis, Freud begins to understand that Frau Anna/Lisa can shed light on his inchoate theory of the death instinct. He looks at the larger implications of Lisa's condition, "Eros in combat with Thanatos," and starts to regard her "not as a woman separated from the rest of us by her illness, but as someone in whom an hysteria exaggerated and highlighted a universal struggle between the life instinct and the death instinct."

At last Freud, telling Lisa he has cured her of "everything but life," brings their sessions to an end. The conflicts raging within her, which, in addition to sexual ones, include feelings about her half-Jewish parentage, cannot be totally extirpated by Freud. Transmuting Lisa's "hysterical misery into common unhappiness" is sufficient success, however, and nine years pass in the interlude before we see her again.

Now having attained some European reputation as a singer, Lisa is on her way to Milan to take up an engagement substituting for an injured Russian diva at La Scala. Since *The White Hotel* is a novel of journeys and destinations, of process, this is, in fact, a route that brings both life and death, for, in Italy, she meets the man who will eventually become her husband and make her a stepmother. He also, being a Russian Jew, is the instrument by which fate

brings Lisa to join the 30,000 dead in the hellish ravine, Babi Yar.

Marriage and assumed maternity allow Lisa to release her long-banked-up store of nurture; heretofore unthinkable evil, which even fiction cannot disguise as a mere historical event, then rapes her evolved womanhood. Thomas's evocation of the horror of the mass slaughter ("No one could have imagined the scene, because it was happening.") is less than 20 pages long, yet it wipes from the reader's mind all that has gone before. It takes Thomas to draw us back, to remind us of the "white hotel" (the myriad interconnections of consciousness and the unconscious) that exists for every human being. Of the murdered masses, he says, for a moment assuming them able to speak about themselves, "If a Sigmund Freud had been listening and taking notes from the time of Adam, he would still not fully have explored even a single group, even a single person."

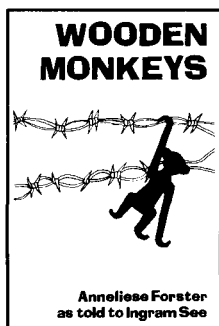
A coda brings Lisa to life again: she has traveled once more, this time arriving in a great, good place—Israel. She has previously had partial resurrections, by Freud, by her husband. This one is complete, and all the clues scattered earlier are woven together into a somehow reassuring unity, reassuring even in the aftermath of the agony.

The "compulsion to repetition" is one of the cornerstones of Freud's thought in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. And repetition, stunningly enacted in imagery that continually circles in on itself, is the method by which Thomas binds us to his prose. The white hotel is the leitmotif: it reminds us that Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, states that dream symbols "frequently have more than one or even several meanings, and, as with Chinese script, the correct interpretation can only be arrived at on each occasion from the context."

The white hotel is the place where we are not; it is also eternally somewhere inside us. It is pre-birth and yet it is after-life. Speaking vulgarly, it can be seen as the place we check in when we check out, in either sleep or death. If, as Freud surmises, the white hotel is one's mother's body ("the original white hotel—we have all stayed there—the mother's womb"), then we must not forget that Lisa's mother perished while in a hotel. And, of course, the very word "hysteria" derives from "suffering in the womb," and so. . . each new idea carries us, swirling in ambiguity, further along.

Wooden Monkeys

by Anneliese Forster
as told to Ingram See



165 p.
Cloth
\$7.95

"Forster had two reasons for her 'addiction' to escorting POW's out of Germany's Russian zone: her bitter memories of Hitler's SS during her childhood, and a postwar experience when 18 Russian Occupation soldiers in her town forced her naked body against a wall, traced it with bullet holes, then raped her. . . Her description of these dangerous night crossings reads like a spy thriller."

—Publishers Weekly



Academy Chicago
360 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60601

In *The White Hotel*, Thomas once again reveals the obsessions with love and death, suffering and artistry that are to be found in his earlier work. (In his previous novel, *The Flute Player*, the heroine dreams of sexual exploration and writing verse, and she has premonitions of violent death; in his poem, "Vienna. Zurich. Constance," Thomas shows his interest in Freud and Jung.) The richness of this book is reminiscent of a painstakingly woven tapestry; one can focus on the details but must be absorbed by the whole. Even the beginning of the world is here ("a very soft, sighing sound," not a Big Bang), as well as the birth of Christ. Thomas's admi-

ration for Freud, now a mythic figure, is such that he makes this shadow that looms so large over 20th-century Western civilization into a human-scale, wise man. But more importantly, Thomas bares his own humanity, as he searches in the ashes of the Holocaust for the soul of man, that "far country which cannot be approached or explored."

Michele Slung

Michele Slung has edited two mystery anthologies, *Crime on Her Mind* (Panthéon) and *Woman's Wiles* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

sage, murder books seem to be filling the role once played by other forms of literature in dramatizing how sharply American experience can be drawn as an adversary relation.

Across such spectrums of fragility and power, the highly eccentric lives and careers of murderers have more than bizarre meaning. Ann Rule's *The Stranger Beside Me* and Lawrence D. Klausner's *Son of Sam* are works of reportage, each dealing with a mass murderer whose primary targets were lovely women. Each is novelistic in its use of fictional devices (montage, interpolated material, constructed dialogue). In both the police hunt has overtones of a quest for a disappearing self; the hunt for an unknown killer fades into the mystery of the killer when caught. Each tale suggests the grotesque pursuit of male power through women. Klausner stresses the result: "This is the incredible story of how a single man terrorized the twelve million citizens of the metropolis of New York." Rule stresses success, calling the killer of more than 36 young women "a bright light in the future of the Republican party, a genius as handsome as a movie idol, a sensitive psychiatric social worker, a budding lawyer, a trusted friend." She describes a killer bent on being the man in charge.

Ann Rule met Theodore Bundy as they worked on the hot lines at Seattle's Crisis Center, helping suicidal or disturbed callers. Rule, a former police-woman, nearing divorce and working as a crime reporter despite the responsibility of caring for her four children, found in Bundy reinforcement for her optimism about the future. Bundy's determination to charm her made it difficult for Rule to accept the evidence that he was not a golden boy. He wanted her to believe in his innocence and superiority while continuing a series of brutal murders. That he succeeded is suggested by how much Rule needs to see Bundy-the-prince and

The Victim Within

Son of Sam

by Lawrence D. Klausner

(McGraw-Hill; \$12.95)

The Stranger Beside Me

by Ann Rule

(Norton; \$14.95)

Not so long ago, Perry Smith and Dick Hickock slit the throats of the Clutter family on the Kansas prairies, a senseless crime committed mostly by Smith. Smith became the hero of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the best seller that ushered in the nonfiction novel. Norman Mailer found in Gary Mark Gilmore, murderer of two defenseless men, a subject for celebration in *The Executioner's Song*. Successful and acclaimed here, now, in Paris as *Le chant du bourreau*, it earns comparable applause while Mailer spends hours on French television dealing with such questions as "Is it because you stabbed your wife that you identified yourself with Gary Gilmore?"

It's usually said that our interest in reading about capital crime proves that each of us has a murderer within. But the attraction may be more than gore and less than our own potentially lethal rage. What's at work in the best murder books is a mythologizing process in which life is narrowed to a drama of confrontation. The anxieties of power and vulnerability, humiliation and force, may each be celebrated and lamented as

formative American experiences. Capote, for example, wrote of Smith not as a killer, but as a prototypical thwarted sensibility, an emotional double of the poetic boy in *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, Capote's novel of adolescence. Showing love toward Smith's sensitivities, as Alfred Kazin has noted, but upholding the validity of Smith's death sentence, Capote turns the novel into complex exemplar of love's insufficiency. Mailer finds in Gilmore fulfillment of his prediction in "The White Negro" (1957) that the murderer of a defenseless man was heroic in challenging the authority of the state. Gilmore pits his wish to die against Utah's unwillingness to implement a death sentence it has not enacted in years and expects to rescind on appeal; Gilmore refuses appeal and forces the state to become an accomplice in his third suicide attempt. As Capote dwells on the fall toward death, so Mailer celebrates an intractability that is bigger than life. Each seems to find his old idea about dominance and submission revitalized through bloodshed. The more blood, the sterner the truth? Whether or not that is the mes-

"THE HARVARD LAW REVIEW's original plan for a strict racial quota had to be scrapped and replaced by a resolution that minorities and women 'be represented to some significant extent.' The Harvard dissenters aren't objecting to affirmative action per se, of course, but only to 'the utility of affirmative action programs at the highest level.' No one is questioning the value of affirmative action, at well, er, other levels. Let 'em eat cake."

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Bundy-the-killer as totally unrelated to each other. The manipulative dependency that characterized his relation to her appeared in his acts of violence as well.

Bundy's most distinctive method of killing was to lure pretty, bright college coeds by seeming the perfect young man on the rise, but in need of help. He would turn up on a college campus, having put his arm or leg in a cast, and ask his victims to help carry his books, his briefcase, or a package from the campus to his car. Once there, they would never return. His murders were characterized by sexual brutalization with found objects or by rape, followed by dismemberment and the scattering of body parts along remote hiking trails. As a University of Washington student, he dispersed heads and thighs in the Cascades; as a University of Utah law student, he came to know the desert. What does it all mean? Did he devour women to engorge his own identity, stealing "rebirth" from the death of women? Did his plaster casts express some feeling that women had broken his mobility, disarmed or crippled him? Were his murders attempts to disprove his dependency and fragility, which he eerily controlled by making and breaking his own casts?

Bundy, master of the pop formalism that style is all, seemed able to resist even the confines of jail. Charged with kidnapping and suspected of several murders, Bundy nonetheless gained extraordinary privileges in jail by maintaining an Olympian superiority to everyone against him. He obtained trial in Aspen, Colorado (where he had also murdered), and had access to a law library and the freedom to prepare his own defense. The prosecuting DA referred to him as "the most cocky person I have ever faced. He sends notes to the judge and calls him at night." A major asset is always that old American love of bravado, no matter who displays it. (Only weeks before in Aspen, Claudine Longet, who shot her lover, had received only 30 days in jail. She would find her cell freshly painted for her, dine on food catered by friends, and go on to marry her defense attorney.) When Bundy escaped, much of Aspen

applauded his success: "Tee-shirts began to appear on well-endowed young women, reading 'Ted Bundy is a One-Night Stand' . . . A restaurant featured Bundy Burgers—open the bun and the meat has fled."

In the world of murder books there is a cult of famous suspects, killers who have achieved folk hero status. Bundy probably saw himself as the most powerful in this cadre, regarding the greater notoriety of the others with envious contempt. On November 29, 1976, he was playing second fiddle at the Utah state prison to Gary Gilmore, who had just made the cover of *Newsweek*. Bundy acidly eyed Gilmore and his girl friend, Nicole Barret, who would join her lover in a suicide pact. He wrote to Ann Rule, indicating his ever-ready sympathy for women: "I'll never forget the deep love and anguish in [Nicole's] eyes. Gilmore, however, is misguided, unstable and selfish."

Noble Bundy escaped to Florida where he broke into a sorority house at Florida State University and beat to death, mutilated, and maimed sleeping young women of Chi Omega. Convicted on two counts of murder (and soon to be convicted on a third), Bundy was still acting as his main defense attorney. He put on the stand as a character witness a woman who was devoted to him. In the course of his questioning, he asked and received a positive answer from her in an exchange that constituted a civil marriage the judge had been unwilling to permit. He knew how to use the system against itself; he knew how female masochism could work for him. At the time of publication, Rule implies, the newlyweds were preparing appeals of Bundy's death sentence.

STUDYING newspaper accounts of David Berkowitz, the ".44 calibre killer," for clues to his own defense, Bundy had written Ann Rule: "If David Berkowitz could be found sane, it meant that no murder defendant in the country could be found legally insane." Berkowitz could not have been further from the ethos that made Bundy adept at self-presentation. Childlike when apprehended, Berkowitz was at the other end of the pole, perceiving himself as a total victim, never in charge of the demons he heard ordering him to kill. A mere soldier in the Devil's army, he was ordered and tormented to kill to supply demons with blood and souls "they could chain and have sex with

. . . forever." He had been promised one of his victims as his bride, but was driven toward greater and greater wretchedness without receiving her.

Author of two previous novels, Lawrence Klausner has written an effective, responsible book, most striking for its pacing of Berkowitz's murders with police efforts to catch him. Writing with extraordinary tact and restraint, Klausner neither offends the dignity of Berkowitz's victims or their families nor exploits the sensational elements of Berkowitz's illness. He includes excerpts from authorized tapes and reproduces Berkowitz's diaries. Royalties from the book will be shared by the author and the families and survivors of the violence between 1975 and 1977 that killed six and wounded seven others, leaving one a paraplegic and another blind.

Lonely in both his ordinary and homicidal phases, Berkowitz was one of those lost souls who drifted through high school, the army, and various jobs. Unable to connect with people, he seems to have been deeply affected only by the death of his adoptive mother when he was 14. He could not find himself as the son of his natural mother, although he located her and she welcomed him with love. As the son of the Devil, Sam, he felt he was only being used to supply victims and would soon be discarded. Yet he showed willingness to yield to Sam's wish to be rid of him by launching a suicidal raid. When caught, he was planning to take an arsenal to Southampton and deploy himself on the beach.

The Son of Sam's distinctive method of killing involved shooting young couples parked in cars, a method redolent with possible meanings. Was he trying for some connection to the American rites of passage he had missed? Killing after midnight, he turned up like a troll, a bogeyman, a destroyer out of nightmarish fairy tales of sexual retribution.

Neither Ann Rule nor Lawrence Klausner addresses the meaning of the methods used. Yet Bundy and Berkowitz each repeated their methods as essential steps in the drama of their need to kill. Similar in anxieties over their own vulnerability and power, they part company on the issue of identity. Berkowitz's repetition of his method said who he was. It expressed to himself and his victims that life and death are not in one's own hands. His life and his victims' lives went out of control together.

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Bundy's method also reflected the need to establish an identity at the expense of others. But it demonstrates how murder can be an act of appropriation in which the identity of the perpetrator is more important than that of the victim. Bundy took away the identities of his victims by piling up a body count, destroying their uniqueness by multiplying them and by stealing their lives. Your death makes me! The more death, the more being! was the macabre message of his raids against the living. When caught, in contrast to Berkowitz who ceased to be "interesting," whose signature killings were his "self," Bundy continued his war of appropriation by usurping roles: lawyer, judge, commentator. He acquired many selves through killing, but no self.

Turning crime into literature has the lamentable effect of preserving lives too horrible not to fade into the police blotter. But Rule and Klausner also return us to the recognitions of tragedy. What spills out of these books is a scale and pitch of human loss rarely found now in other forms of literature. Fear of life going out of control, fear of anonymity, a consuming fragility—all turn up in murder books as issues of life and death. Such books do not appeal to our sense of power, but to our recognition of vulnerability. We read them not because of any murderer within, but because they speak so directly to the victim each of us harbors.

Josephine Hendin

Josephine Hendin teaches English at New York University. Her most recent book is *Vulnerable People: A View of American Literature Since 1945* (Oxford University Press). She is currently writing a book on violence and American literature.

Brief Review

Company by Samuel Beckett

(Grove Press; \$8.95)

Although in the past decade Beckett's dramatic voice has become the most distinctive of our time, his work in prose during this same period would hardly by itself make his name a household word. No one who has seen *Not I*, *That Time*, or *Footfalls* will forget the impact of such terrifying stage virtuos-

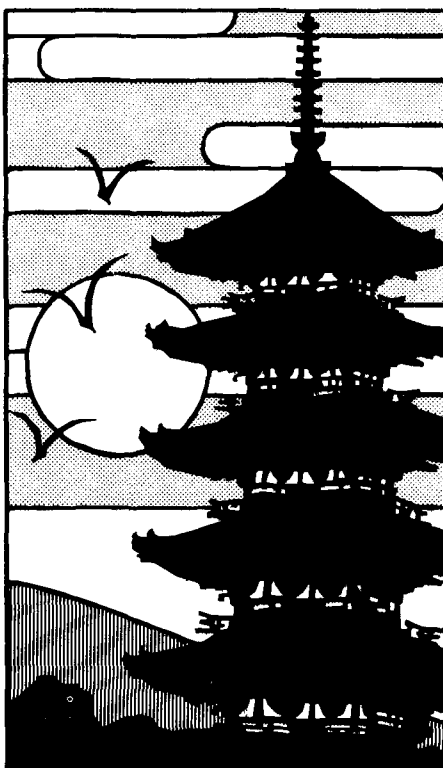
ity. Complicated stage maneuvers are designed to make the unrelenting drama of these pages directly accessible to the audience. Beckett's recent fiction, however, is quite another matter. Far from riveting us in our seats with the immediacy of his stage productions, these prose pieces are likely to strike the reader as an acquired taste.

The publication of *Company* will do little to change this unenviable situation. Beckett's most extended narrative since *The Lost Ones* (1972), that disturbing story in which the narrator crowds 200 (though actually 205) "little people of searchers" into a flattened cylinder, *Company* provides us with a far more empty space. Here the reader is compelled to imagine only two figments, a man flat on his back in the dark and the voice he hears. But numbers in this case are as tricky as they have previously been in the cylinder. Two's company, three's a crowd—and in Beckett's room, if indeed we are dealing with a room, we may very well need to entertain the proposition of more than these two "vice-existers." First, the man flat on his back in the dark. Second, the voice he hears. Third, "another" the voice may be addressing (this notion the narrator

soon discards as chimerical). Fourth, the narrator ("deviser") himself. And fifth, Samuel Beckett. That makes five—or four—or is it three? For in this work "by far the greater part of what is said cannot be verified."

Such narrative games demand a lively attentiveness to reading—the verb as well as the noun—for the story told here has no more substance than Beckett's way of telling it. *Company* is tough going, but it does provide us with the opportunity to notice some of the characteristics of that very noble battle its author continues to wage with words. Difficult to read at first, Beckett's "fable" becomes surprisingly familiar, even haunting, each time you come back to it. Continually conjuring "something out of nothing," his language makes for good company. And as this "craving for company revives," you suddenly find yourself like the man on his back, like the narrator, and finally like Beckett himself, "imagining you are not alone while knowing full well that nothing has occurred to make this possible." Nothing, that is, except for the text you hold in your hands. Such a figment may be "comfortless," but it does remind us that imaginative life, at least Beckett's,

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is not quite dead after all.

Verification, however tempting, remains nevertheless tentative. The only solidity we can rely on is to be found in language itself. *Company* therefore provides us with a true voice of feeling, crying not in the wilderness this time, but on paper. For the company Beckett keeps, this fable seems bent on assuring us, is, once again, strictly with words.

Enoch Brater

Enoch Brater teaches modern drama at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Correspondence, from page 3

attaining the affirmative goal of racial balance. From this, Bunzel concludes that it is up to Congress to "begin reasserting its own powers and responsibilities" in order to check the "coercive action" (i.e., ordering busing) of what he calls an "imperial judiciary."

Yet Bunzel offers no justification for his claim that defining the means to integrate (i.e., busing) is more "political" than the decision to order desegregation. One can, in fact, argue that desegregation is a very political issue; certainly it was for the many Americans who feared the consequences of eliminating dual school systems.

And the "constitutional" nature of affirmative integration has been developed in a long series of Supreme Court decisions, including *Brown II* (1955), *Cooper v. Aron* (1958), *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* (1969), and *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education* (1971), which laid the basis for busing as an appropriate means of achieving affirmative integration.

*Susan R. Elsen
New York, New York*

To the editors:

However much merit there may be in John H. Bunzel's conclusions about the recent Supreme Court decisions ordering busing, his assertion that these decisions represent a radical departure from the principles laid down in *Brown v. Board* is erroneous. Chief Justice Warren's opinion in *Brown*, unlike the Civil Rights Act of 1964, by no means man-

dated race-blind assignment of students to schools. Segregated schools were declared unconstitutional not because they took students' race into account but for a very different reason: because the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires that "the opportunity of an education . . . where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms," while "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

What must the state do to provide the equal opportunity the Constitution demands? Warren, to be sure, did not explicitly order affirmative integration. But he did declare that equalizing "buildings, curricula, qualifications and salaries of teachers, and other 'tangible' factors" is not enough. The clear implication is that only an integrated school can provide acceptable, "equal" education to minority students. Providing equal opportunity thus includes guaranteeing the right of each minority student to attend an integrated school. The path from here to busing is obvious.

*Joel Suldan
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

Tax breaks are for the birds

To the editors:

Reagan's tax reduction program has two purposes: (1) to give people more income to cope with inflation, and (2) to spur economic productivity. I resent the second feature very much because it means more tax breaks for business. Business should be productive anyway.

The justification that Reagan and the business community have given us is that business is like the golden goose. You can't expect it to survive with burdens placed upon it on a bread-and-water diet. Its diet must be rich and its environment regulation-free. I resent having to kiss it from head to stern. A mouthful of feathers for a few eggs doesn't seem like a bargain to me.

*Eric Steel
Oakland, California*

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced, and held to under 200 words. Longer letters may be abridged due to lack of space.

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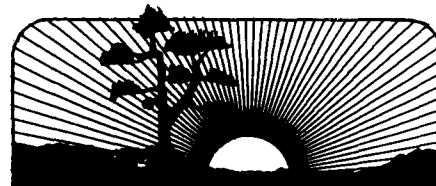
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I just read my first popular romance. I read it because its author is Margo Bode, which is not, as I'd thought all romance novelists' names were, a false name fabricated according to some mysterious formula designed to appeal to women readers. She is a real person and is, among other things of course, married to Ken Bode, who used to be *TNR*'s politics editor, as all but our newer subscribers know. This is her first romance, and if she is hooked on writing them (which seems altogether likely, since she obviously had a very good time with this one), I'm hooked on reading hers. I doubt she is responsible for *Jasmine Splendor*'s cover, which is all purple, pink, and gold with a tantalizing touch of flesh and bears the exclamation, "In the Grand Turk's sultry harem, her pale beauty was an exotic prize!" Also I doubt her publishers, Pocket Books, fully appreciate what's inside their gaudy package. The reader, however, is tipped off that this is not a romance that takes itself passionately seriously when the heroine, Aimee Dubuc de Rivery, announces on page 10, "I'm blonde, of course." Unlike her hair color, Aimee's irony is not standard fare for the genre, and that's what makes this book something of an exotic prize in the sultry book racks. The central and protracted melodrama concerns, of course, the 18th-century heroine's loss of virtue; but just when the momentous event seems about to be staged and the reader's excitement is high, Margo Bode wheels out a very feeble ravisher. Aimee observes of him: "It was clear even to a woman of my inexperience that if the Dey of Algiers were to launch an assault on my virginity, it would be as secure as the ramparts of Mont-Saint-Michel." Aimee, in short, is no shrinking jasmine. In a reversal of the usual male hierarchy that prevails in romances, men, "who make such an unforgivable muck of everything they do," rate the lowest, way below the self-possessed women, even below the cagey Ottoman eunuchs who figure indispensably in the intrigues. This is an amusing book which offers an excuse for stodgy *TNR* readers to peek at a genre they've no doubt thought it proper to ignore.

With Prince Charles's engagement, we have a royal romance to dote on for a whole half of a year. What Walter Bagehot wrote more than 100 years

ago of Victorian England is still true, which is part of the wonder of it: "No feeling could seem more childish than the enthusiasm of the English at the marriage of the Prince of Wales. . . . But no feeling could be more like common human nature as it is and as it is likely to be. . . . All but a few cynics like to see a pretty novel touching for a moment the dry scenes of the grave world. A princely marriage is the brilliant edition of a universal fact, and, as such, it rivets mankind." The facts to be learned from the press about Prince Charles's and Lady Diana's doings are a captivating mix, as Bagehot knew, of the brilliantly royal and the ordinary. For example, we know Lady Diana's illustrious lineage (she's descended from Henry VII) and apparently all England knows her measurements. There are reports that she will be immured in Clarence House receiving instruction in a strict and intricate "royal code of conduct" from the Queen Mother and other adepts. It is also said that 19-year-old Lady Diana is innocent of a more common kind of conduct; she is, as Fleet Street reassures, "a girl without a past." Although the special feeling for the monarchy is hard to characterize, a quaintly unscientific polling organization in Britain called Mass Observation has for some years done its best to capture the amorphous spiritual-gossipy sentiment involved. MO volunteer reporters sidle into crowds at royal do's to eavesdrop and converse with "the masses"; they scorn such techniques as phoning random samples to spring questions out of the blue. Some of MO's findings are unusual: in 1964, 30 percent of those questioned believed the queen was specially chosen by God; in the early 1970s out of "a thousand or so" people asked, 200 or 300 not only had dreamed about the royal family but remembered their dreams in detail. The realm of the unconscious aside, MO's findings confirm the soundness of Prince Charles's choice. The English these days seem to favor a reigning couple who are neither too ostentatiously noble nor too determinedly democratic, and they've always been especially devoted to those who are either old and wise or young and hopeful. Now that the kingdom has finished celebrating the 80th birthday of the Queen Mum, who was born while Queen Victoria still reigned, it can happily lavish attention on the future

Royal Highness—born, just think, in the 1960s.

Once upon a time, kings had tasters in their entourages. Some hapless fellow would nibble the royal repast and then, depending upon whether he keeled over or smacked his lips, the king would either send the dish back or dig in. The fear, of course, was poison from an enemy. Nowadays, presidents receive gustatorial protection as part of an elaborate Secret Service routine whenever they leave the White House and won't be back for dinner. By noon of last Saturday when President Reagan planned to dine at the fashionable East Side restaurant, Le Cirque, several FDA inspectors, sent by the Secret Service, were in the kitchen alongside the chef, Alain Sailhac. They weren't keeping watch against a fiend who might try to sneak in and pour deadly powder into a pot, nor did they suspect M. Sailhac of evil intentions. So what were they doing there? Reviewing the ingredients and the preparations in order to prevent any accidental contamination of the presidential food. The chef maintained his French dignity, but was not pleased with the interference. "They want sauces to be cooled rapidly," he complained, "—from hot to cold in 30 minutes so bacteria do not develop. But I think for flavor and texture, sauces should cool slowly. But, of course, for today we will do it their way." Their way is typical of the Secret Service's illogical calculus of risk and regulatory zeal that Steve Chapman exposed in "The Secret Service's Biggest Secret" (*TNR*, January 24, 1981). Here, after all, the new administration had a chance to show its confidence in free market forces: Le Cirque's glamorous patrons don't keep coming back for more because they are gluttons for bacterial punishment. Not at those prices. And surely the restaurant's most glamorous diner, the president, can rest assured that the staff needs no prompting to lavish extra-special attention on his dinner. It would serve the fussy Secret Service right if President Reagan, upon tasting the sauce that had lost flavor and texture due to its enforced quick cooling, had sent the dish back to the kitchen, where M. Sailhac, free at last from FDA scrutiny, could cook it his own way.

A.H.

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